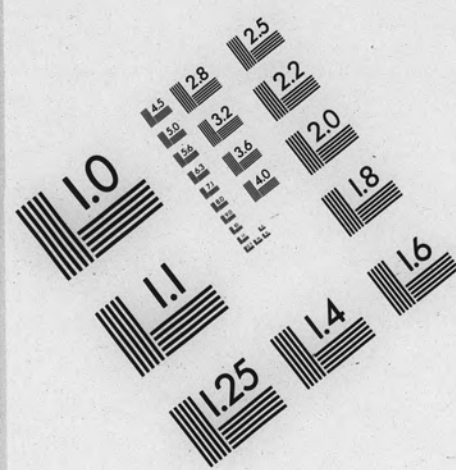


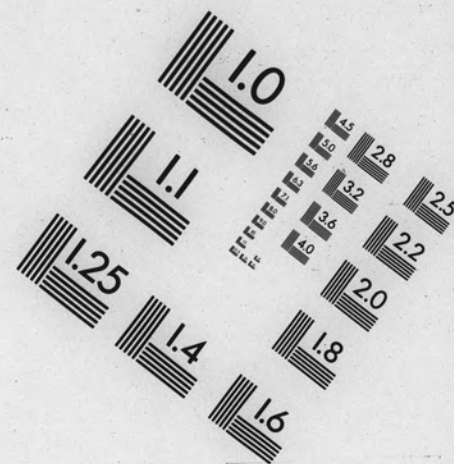
Journal, 1941.



AIM

Association for Information and Image Management

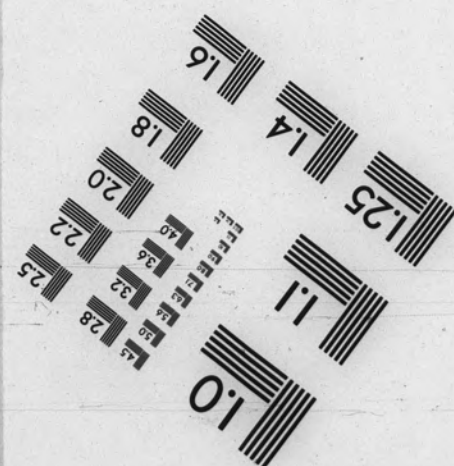
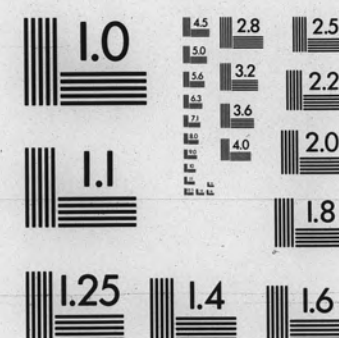
1100 Wayne Avenue, Suite 1100
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
301/587-8202



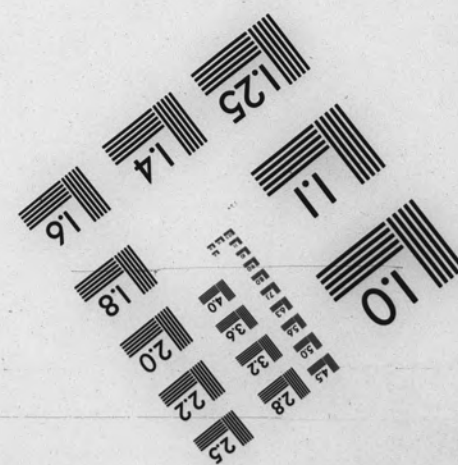
Centimeter



Inches



MANUFACTURED TO AIM STANDARDS
BY APPLIED IMAGE, INC.



849

Monday, Jan. 20th, 1941. page 1.

I awoke a little after six when Frank arrived to get me started with some steaming hot coffee. I needed it, having slept but a couple of hours after sitting with Lyle until nearly four.

At seven I went over to the big house to have coffee with Robina and the Madam, after which Robina started for Shreveport. I rode with her as far as town. There had been a heavy front, and the morning seemed more clear and the sunshine more warm than usual.

I was back home by ten thirty, having walked from Bermuda, and after running through the mail with Aunt Cammie, we listened to the broadcasts from Washington. The Roosevelt Third Inaugural address somehow fell short of what I had expected. As always his voice was the perfection of radio presentation, but somehow the speech itself fell short of my expectations, for I suppose I had thought of this first time that a Third Inaugural had been held in American History, the content of the address would be equally unique,--at least up to the standard set by Lincoln's Second Inaugural. But it wasn't.

After dinner Lyle came over to my house for an hour or so, and immediately after coffee, we got into the big road. I went with him as far as Bermuda, after which he went on to Natchitoches. For my part, I went down to the margin of Cane River opposite the colored church on the far bank. I could hear the voices of children playing in the school grounds, and shortly a voice came to be from the far bank, - although I couldn't see the person who spoke,--asking if I want to cross over. I signified that I did.

Within ten minutes the flat-boat, propelled by oars, came into sight, and the boatman turned out to be the principal of the school. He was a colored man in his 50's, dressed in a well pressed business suit, and wearing gold rimmed spectacles.

I jumped aboard the flat and as we put out onto the lake, he hinted that we wondered what my "mission" could be. I told him that I merely wanted to visit his school.

He conducted his classes of children around 16 in the wooden frame school building, while Percy Brunson,--brother of our former cook, McKinley, taught in the adjoining building--a colored church. His pupils were about 8 to 12 years of age.

I thanked the bespectacled gentlman for having rowed me across, and after his children filed into the school, I went with Percy to his school after his flock had entered.

850

Friday, August 1st, 1941.

In the absence of my watch, which I had inadvertently left at Melrose, I was quite uncertain as to the hour when I awoke this morning. Dawn proclaimed a new day, but the hour was impossible to guess. I accordingly arose, remembered that Day Light Saving had gone into effect in Mississippi last night, and accordingly felt as ignorant of the time when I encountered a clock as I had been before.

The bus left Natchez at 7:25 A. M., and our progress ~~across~~ across the River was satisfactory, but no sooner than we had touched the Louisiana side that the bus began slowing up and jumping from time to time. Our speed was reduced to about 20 miles per hour, and what with stops to take on and let off passengers we covered ground very slowly.

Further impeding our progress was the fact that we soon ran into endless motorcades of Army trucks, transporting men from Mississippi to the war games in Western Louisiana. These embryo Matians seemed to rush into War very leisurely, making not more than 18 to 20 miles in their progress, with stops of 10 minutes once every hour. With our bus acting so curiously and sandwiched in between these endless miles of Army trucks, we were fortunate to maintain a snail's pace, I reckon.

In approaching Alexandria, we were over two hours late, but fortunately the bus to which I was to change had also been delayed, and our bus driver, flagging down the Shreveport-bound bus to which I had to chag, assisted me in transferring to the North bound one, and so I reached Natchitoches about on time, where I found Pat and driven up to meet me, - Clyde driving.

Half after 2 P.M. I was back at Melrose. It was grand to be with Aunt Cammie again, and to get caught up on the conversation we had dropped a week back. It was as surprising as ever, too, that everything had grown so magnificently during my absence, and the honeysuckle vines were beginning to clamor up the new picket fence, and would have started up the old fence, if some diligent gardener hadn't pulled them up as weeds. My sunken garden had been worked, too, and looked spick and span. I was sorry I hadn't more clearly pointed out that I had re-planted portulacka and borders of dwarf zinnias a week before I left. All these had been diligently hoed up too.

Inside the house ever thing looked so fresh and so restful, and as always, Aunt Cammie had ~~xxx~~ decorated the living room and bedroom with great bouquets,--a dahlias spreading from a great vase in the fireplace, and beautifully arranged, and a huge bouquet of butterfly lilies to laden the air with a perfume, heavy and sweet.

851

Friday, August 1st, 1941 - page 2.

After supper we sat and talked for a pleasant hour,
and thanks to a good moon, I took a short turn before going
to bed.

852

Monday, Augst 10th, 1941.

Clear weather and hot.

I knocked off a few letters between five and six a.m.,
chatted for a few moments with Fran and Sam - separately,
and before seven o'clock, I had headed down the Montrose
Lane.

Leon's younger brother came along with a wagon,
and although the pair of mules didn't make inordinate
speed, I accepted the invitation made by the dirver to
ride a way.

We toalked crops a little, and ~~xxx~~ water melons in
particular. He ~~xx~~ told me he hadn't eaten water melon
since the day his papa was drowned a few years back.
It is my understanding that the man's wife had nagged madly
on that fatal day about a water melon, and ever since the
family has considered water melo bad luck.

I said goodbye at Montrose, went on to town, and
on my way back rode part way with McKinnley's brother
Percy, whom I hadn't seen since I visited him at his
colored school up at St. Pauls some time last Spring.

We stopped at the ~~xxxx~~ Futurell Place, my first
to that rather remote plantation between Bermuda and
Natchitoches on the east bank of Cane River. I was
impressed by the number and concentration of cabins,
farm buildings, outbuildings, etc. I noticed a mill
on the place where they still grind there own sugar cane
for molasses from cane grown on the place. It is a horse
power one, and one of the few, I suppose remaining
in this locality.

Back home by noon, and after dinner, Aunt Cammie
and I worked on the Johnson Diary, for the year, 1846.
I was impressed by the similarity of the opening line
in each entry: "Today is a beautiful day and nothing new".

After supper we read from B. L. C. Wailes' Geographical
Report, and at 8, after saying goodnight, I walked down
to the bridge. It was a night of stars, paled by the
incessant flash of heat lightening away to the south-west.
Every second or two the balck surface of Cane River
was momentarily silvered, with the church steeple and
great trees on its margin etched in black. - Merely a flash
and then the dark. I returned home about nine, and
slept.

853

Tuesday, August 12th, 1941 - page 2.

somebody must be wrong. And somehow I find everything Cliff says inclined toward 500 year gaps from the truth.

And so, after saying goodnight, I took a turn in the big road. I like to talk to darkies, especially after talking to Clif. Their fundamentals and values are so refreshing.

I ran into Peter and Brosie's boy. We sat for a while on the bridge. The surface of the River was as smooth as glass, and star dust from the heavens seemed to sprinkle a Milky Way across its blue black mirror. In the groups of trees which identify the approaches at either end of the bridge a fire fly would occasionally rocket into the air or describe a lovely arc against the balck velvet of the velvet black foliage. Ice cream never tasted better.

I was home before nine, and after a leisurely hot bath I was glad to stretch out in bed and contemplate the circumstances which gave to civilized man a faint suggestion of the virulent qualities and positive attributes of Africa in Louisiana.

At mid-night, I took another short turn, and thence home by the half light of a belatedly rising moon. I slept marvelously, glad only to awaken from time to time in order to sigh with contentment and fall asleep again.

854

Tuesday, August 13th, 1941.

Another fine day, all blue and tremendously hot.

Sam brought my breakfast early, and entertained me for a spell while I was having my bacon and eggs. He spoke of a darkie up the road whose wife had been in Alexandria Hospital for some time, but the seriousness of whose case had impelled the authorities in that Institution to have her removed to New Orleans where more adequate hospitalization for her particularly affliction could be made available.

Somewhere along the route, - this patient, traveling in an ambulance, got lost, - and three days have passed without any of the authorities in either city or along the route being able to locate her. Sam said the ~~man~~ man was especially worried for fear his wife might have died and that she would be buried in the "potage" field.

Aunt Cammie and I worked on the Johnson Collection for a couple of hours in the morning, but Celeste and Mrs. Regard came over for coffee, and a fairly heavy mail also cut into the couple of hours before Aunt Cammie takes a nap.

After dinner, we planned to resume our labors, but Cliff Byrd, back from a trip into South Louisiana, came in, and the balance of the day, he and the Madam spent in going over old times.

We sat in the upstairs sitting room until 7:30 when I said good night. Cliff has such a smattering of information that is buttressed and cracked with such an astonishing amount of imagination and mis-information, that while I would gladly learn much from him, I never feel that I can accept anything much because of the flaws in nearly everything he says about anything I know anything about, so that the residue I discount automatically as being untrustworthy.

An example in kind is this: He asked me if I had ever seen the Morgan Collection at the Metropolitan. I had. He asked me if I had seen the famous tapestry of Gobelin in that Collection, depicting the Field of the Cloth of Gold. I hadn't. He said it was about 6 feet high, and hundreds of yards in length. I was astonished. I had seen sketches of the famous meeting of Francis I of France, Charles V of Spain and Henry the 8th of England on the famous Falindars field, a meeting which took place, as I recall in the first half of the 1500's. I was accordingly amazed when Cliff explained to me that the Field of the Cloth of Gold was the place,-- Hastings, I suppose, where William the Conqueror had won his decisive victory over Harold of England in 1066. Somebody

855

Wednesday, August 13th, 1941.
Wdd

Frank arrived at five, and somehow we had much to talk about this morning. He told me he was feeling so much better and that he hadn't had anything to drink in 3 weeks. I must say he does look better. The three week's record is marvelous if he has really counted the calendar correctly.

Brother Anderson came by before Sam arrived. He wanted me to write him a love letter. He started to tell me the name of the one to whom it was addressed, but I interrupted to inquire if it was being sent by mail or if he was to deliver it locally. The latter seemed to be the case, and so I asked him not to tell me the name of the person to whom it is was intended.

Yesterday I wrote a love letter for Sam, and as both Sam and Brother Anderson are married to sisters, and as I suspected that this note from these two swains might be intended for one and the same person, I preferred that the dusky "lady's" name remain unknown so far as I was concerned.

It was interesting that Brother Anderson's letter began precisely in the same manner as Sam's had the day before: -- "Just a few lines to let you know I am thinking of you". It was interesting, too, that both resorted to poetry about half way down the page. But what impresses me most is that both in Sam's and Brother's case, - as so frequently happens in cases of darkies, - their dictation is almost perfect so far as their unmindfulness of my presence. I laugh to myself when by contrast I think of executives I have known who have always staggered around for hours as though in a straight jacket, trying to get out a most casual business letter.

After coffee at the big house, and must inspection of birthday presents which Pat had recieved during the past few days, the Madam, Cliff and Pat, taking Mr. Brew in toe, went down to Cloutierville. They returned home for dinner.

In the afternoon Cliff and the Madam worked on a slip cover they were making for Cloutierville. I remained home all the afternoon.

After supper, even as last night, I talked for a little while in the upstairs sitting room, and then walked out as far as the garage. The taactors were going into the cotton fields for some dusting with Paris Green. J. H., - ~~whisk~~ with whom I had made a round of the cotton fields on both sides of the River was about to make another round. He asked me to accompany him but I declined. Returning home, I folded up early, but couldn't sleep. I needed exercise or companionship or something or other. But by midnight I slept.

856

Tuesday, August 19th, 1941.

Cloudless skies and ceilingless thermometer readings.

But in spite of the promise of heat, I took to the big road early, made it to town, returning part of the way with Sam Martin who oversees J. H.'s palntation at Cogniac. He said the cotton worms have just about taken the crop in that locality.

I chatted for a while with Ashly Kirkland, who is putting further additions on to his store up Cane River from Melrose. He is a curious mulatto, having always lived all of his days in New Orleans, --after spending his childhood on Cane River, while Jenny Balthazar's husband was killed in an automobile accident, leaving Jenny quite a little money. They Ashley married Jenny for her money, and returned to Cane River, --still a typical pleasure man, an expensive husband, and not at all possessed of those cardinal virtues which seem to endear most Cane River mulattoes to one.

I also stopped along my route to chat for a moment with Sammy Balthazar, and so home be noon.

There were guests for dinner, --the family, and in consequence, as they remained for the afternoon, Aunt Cammie and I did no work together. And so I did gardening and arranged some of my papers with the help of Loney, Julius' 17 year old brother, and a nice boy.

After supper, I worked a little longer in my garden, and after the tumult had died, Aunt Cammie and I ran over the day's mail which we hadn't had a chance to get to before. There were some nice letters, - Mrs. Brandon, from Atalma, and several others. There was a volume of Alice Duer Miller's, - The White Cliffs, which some one had had sent me from D. H. Holmes of New Orleans, and there were some very pleasant photographs.

We said good night before eight, and afterward I took a long walk along the river, and sat for a time in the cool breeze passing across the bridge. Frankly I was tired, and my ankle seemed awfully tired. By 11 I was asleep in bed.

857

Wednesday, August 20th, 1941.

Another perfect day, and inordinately hot.

I guess I walked a little too far yesterday in my trip to town. I banged my ankle on something or other a day or two back, thinking nothing of it at the time, but now I find that it is rather discolored, that the skin is broken, and I realize I have such a thing as an ankle when I walk.

Sam was all tangled up in the front garden this morning, and so after Aunt Cammie and I had finished our joint labors on the missing Johnson Diaries for the day, I did a little gardening on my own hook, but I got no further than clipping the hedges, etc.

After dinner Aunt Cammie and I worked again on Natchez material until three, when I gathered up Sam and together we undertook so trench digging for Giant's beard to be planted tomorrow to finish out the border of the upper terrace of the sunken garden.

While we labored, visitors arrived.--Levee and Earle. Levee wanted to do something, and so took up the trench diggin. Mr. Brew, proud of his 9 or ten years, busied himself in transferring old brick from their neat pile outside the picket fence to the top of the terrace steps whence we shall lay a walk.

After supper, which was fraught with a certain exhaustion on the far end of the table.--thanks to excitement brought

about by supper visitors (interruption), and when the visitors had gone back home we began reading about 7:30 from B. L. C.'s Geographical Report.

At eight we said goodnight. I forgot to add that Levee confided in me that six of the Melrose boys, --Abmrose's 2 boys, Buddy Red and Junior, too, and Peter and I have forgotten which other one, planned to leave Sunday for Alexandria to get a job. I suppose the oldest boy of this group is just about fifteen. Pulling out now just as the cotton picking season is opening represents an absence of calculation on their part, I should say. I am afraid the Alexandria jobs are rather transitory, too, probably wholly dependant upon the influx of soldiers in this area who are here for the war games, and will be returning to their base camps throughout the U. S. within another two or three weeks. It seems too bad for these children to take to the big road at such a sure fire disappointment in the offing.

At mid-night, in spite of my game leg, I took a short walk under the stars. They were so big and so bright, the sky so beautifully dark gray-blue and the air so cool.. And so back home alone, for Grandpa must have been reluctant to forego the contemplation of the Heavenly bodies or whatever he was up to.

858

Thursday, August 21st, 1941.

It occurred to me on awakening this morning that yesterday must have been the anniversary of that wild night of August 20th, one year back. As my Journal isn't here, I wouldn't have any means of consulting it, but I do believe the 20th was the night when wind and rain, and failure of the electricity put everything along the Melrose front in an up roar.

Aunt Cammie and I worked together in the morning. She seemed very tired.--malaria supplemented by doings of the children who never seem to realize they are killing her.

After dinner we worked further on the Johnson manuscripts, and afterward I began laying the birch walk between the privet hedge and the Giant's Beard which Sam and I had set out earlier in the morning.

With the sun boiling and no breeze, brick laying didn't take long to get sweat cascading about my person. In the midst of this endeavor, someone knocked on the gate of the far entrance on the other end of the house. It was Ora Garland Williams and Mr. Postel. They wanted to talk Slave Hospitals. I seated them, took a hurried shower, and sat with them for half an hour or more. Ora had just returned from a Virginia - New York

I liked what she had to say about Williamsburg, Va., and about Arsenic and Old Lace which she had seen in New York. Mr. Postel, who had never been in the Hospital before, seemed stunned by the oil paintings of the several darkies and mulattoes. He thought the one of the white man and his mulatto son (sic) was outrageous. He thought colored people were "alright in their place". Dumbly I asked him where that was. He said he didn't know, but that the portrait of the man and his son(sic) would drive him crazy if he had to live with it. He needn't worry, he never will have to.

Supper at six, after the guests had gone, and yesterday's guests came to pick up Aunt Cammie and Pat to take them to Cloutierville to see the new Armoir Lyle had bought in New Orleans for Aunt Cammie. I declined the invitation to make the trip.

At home, I saved, entertained Mr. Brew and Toot, --Elam, Jr., until after seven, walked out to the garage and talked with Peter and Eugene, and thence home again when Aunt Cammie returned. We read until eight o'clock, after which I retired, soaking my right ankle in hot water and epsom salts to reduce the swelling which has mounted steadily all day. Just as I got seated, Grandpa began banging away at the screen door, but he had to content himself for 20 minutes until my doctoring was taken care of, whereupon I opened the door and he flew in, and immediately followed me to bed.

859

Friday, August 22nd, 1941.

another perfectly clear and perfectly roasting day, following a deliciously cool night.

Sam did a little work for me early before breakfast in the sunken garden. My ankle didn't feel very conducive to much leaping about on my part.

Aunt Cammie and I worked a little while together at the big house, although several interruptions by servants cut down the production. Clemence, among others, had much to tell. Among other things she spoke of the time Emanuel tore off her wig and tossed it into the hearth. She said he did it because she had been drinking. She said further that instead of throwing it slap into the big place, he kept it on the side, pulling out a few coals or embers to place on it so that it would burn more slowly and so aggravate her the more.

She never did get another wig, but is now concentrating on the dentist. She has one more tooth to have out, and then she is going to get herself a new "wrack" she said.

at 10:30 Aunt Cammie took her morning nap, and I sat and talked on my front gallery with Frank and Mr. Brew. Frank had a couple of things he wanted to confide in me regarding his children, May and Tony. Smart little Mr. Brew, as though to leave us alone, went into the house and fixed up the fan with the standard, placing it immediately before the screen door before which I sat sunning myself. Turning the fan on I had all the advantages that the sun might give my ankle, and all the stir of breeze that the fan could muster. Frank, busy as he talked, was cleaning my new walking shoes and the "low quarters", as the darkies call low shoes.

The afternoon ran along smoothly, some labor and some rest, with a little entertaining thrown in, and a hot bath & to top things off.

Several darkies passed by my house during the afternoon, all laughing at Little Brosie, - Brosie Peace's small boy. Living half a mile from the big house but down the river, the whole place had been disturbed last night by wild screams from that direction. Sam had leaped out of bed and rushed down the road with nothing but his pants on in his effort to reach the scene of the murder as soon as possible. Other darkies scampered from thither and yon, and several in even less attire. It turned out that in a dream, Little Brosie had seen a big old woman standing in the doorway, and in terror he had walked in his sleep, screaming as he went. But even this prosaic circumstances put the river on edge, and Willie Collins and several others would stay in their houses alone if husband or wife should have chanced to be absent.

860

Saturday, August 23rd or 24th, 1941.

Fair and hot.

I did a little gardening before breakfast, and clipped off all the leaves, save one, from the huge banana plant, some 20 feet high, recently transplanted from the White Garden to the Sunken Garden, and so fixed by the picket fence, as to cast a shadow during the noon day heat on the pool. The leaves on the plant had withered as a result of the transplanting, but a new one came forth immediately, and has now unfolded to astonishing size, - I suppose about a foot in width and four or five feet in length. It somehow, with the trunk of the plant, suggests a flamboyant Venetian mast.

I did a little mail, but a severe pain in my left arm and the difficulty of sitting in a comfortable position, thanks to the pain in my right ankle discouraged much effort at operating this machine.

At Nine o'clock, Aunt Cammie and I prepared to resume our labors on the Johnson papers, but Dan, who had come up from Baton Rouge last night, came to sit with us for a chat, and Charles, from Little River, dropped by for half an hour or so. Added to this was an inspection made of a sample of the water from the recently cleaned cistern, now coated on the top of the water by a curious milky film. Charles thought it to be the residue of the snail's slim which he says is almost impossible to remove from the surface of a cistern, or almost anything else. We debated the question as to the advisability of having the cistern drained again or of letting the water remain in it with the hope that all this foreign material might eventually float to the top, so it could thus be skimmed off, and then by draining the cistern, be enabled to accumulate a supply of clear rain water. In the mean time the other cisterns are running a bit low.

At noon time Buddy Red came by to see me. He is thinking of going to Alexandria for a job this week-end. Poor Child..... And then Loney Brown came by to help me out a little. He isn't going to Alexandria.

In the afternoon Aunt Cammie and I resumed our labors from yesterday, since this morning we hadn't done a lick of work. I returned home about 3:30, chatted for half an hour with Buddy who had returned to see me, and then I napped until nearly six o'clock, - happy to find surcease from the left arm - right ankle aches and pains. I awoke only after supper was nearly done.

In the late evening Mrs. Wagner came down from Natchitoches to spend several days working on the catalogue of the Melrose Library. I didn't see her, as Aunt Cammie entertained her in the Shop, and I didn't feel like skipping down stairs but once, - which I did about eight o'clock, and so home to bed.

861

Sunday, August 24th, 1941.

Another beautiful day.

I was a little handicapped from doing much, thanks to the infected ankle and the boil in my ~~xx~~ left arm pit, but things didn't go so badly if I just sat still.

Frank cahtted rather longer with me this morning,--from 5:45 until nearly six. There was much to be covered concerning his daughter May, how had left Celeste's employ to go to Alexandria where she had a job waiting for her.

Then there was a little of last night's doings on Cane River. There wasn't much,--Fugabou got knocked down at the Saloon by Jack Lacaze, the deputy Sheriff, but that wasn't anythin' different from any Saturday night when Jack always hovers around that place to keep things down to a shout.

Mat, instead of Sam, brought me my breakfast, and shortly after I had finished, Bluff dropped by to ~~z~~ make his usual Sunday rounds after winding the sever 1 clocks in the different houses.

At nine, Aunt Cammie and I worked a little, but s on after we had begun, Betty Regard came to call, and the three of us had our Louisiana brew together. I then withdrew so the ladies could talk together. Betty came over to Lyle's to call on me later. She confessed that it was she who sent me the copy of The White Cliffs by Alice Duer Miller earlier in the week. She is going to send me a white marble garden bench, inscribed, from Alabama.

Peter and Elam came in shortly afterward. There was some talk about the boys who were heading for Alexandria on today's noon bus. I Asked Peter if he was a-travelin'. He said he wasn't.

At dinner there was the usualy famil ga herin, including Dan hope from Baton Rouge, and Mrs. Wagner whom I met for the first time.

After dinner, I retired again. Elam came to see me, and Loney arrived shortly afterward. He said the boys had justleft for the bus,--Peter, Buddy Red, and Junior, Levee Peace and his brother, McKinley, J. C. Bell and someothers I didn't know. Poor children, none of them more than 16, and none of them ever in a city before, and starting for croded Alexandria, of all places. The Children's Crusade all over again. May God be with them.

Aunt Cammie, Mrs. Wagner, Pat and I had supper together, and Aunt Cammie and I re d for a little while. Physical discomfort, however, made inroads on my interest. I retired at 7:45, sick.

862

Monday, ~~z~~ August 25th, 1941.

Another fine day, with but a momentary sprinkle at noon to intensify the deep blue of the morning and afternoon sky and the heat of the sun.

The day really didn't amount to much, so far as anything I did, keeping myself parked, as I did most of the time, balancing as neatly as possible between some vague axis equidistant from my infected ankle and mysore shoulder,--one of the right side, and the other on the left.

In onsequence I heard quite a bit of radio of indifferent interest. One news broadcast was concerning Alexander Woolcot who purposes to go to Londo for a series of broadcasts, it is said. His health doesn't permit flying, - and so he will assume a more leisurely and they say more dangerous route, theiternary not being given. In ~~z~~ his last letter to Aunt Cammie, he said he purposed to come down to stay here at Melrose for a while in November. I wonder if London comes in between.

Aunt Cammie and I worked together on the missing Johnson Diaries, both in the morning and afternoon. Celeste sat in on the morning one for the coffee interlude.

Oney came to see me at 12:30. He is a w sweet child and asked if he could hear the President speak on the radio at 12:45. I told him he could. But it seems the President wasn't scheduled to speak until a week hence, and so that went by the boards.

After supper Aunt Cam ie took Mrs. Wagner and me around to see some splendid blossoms of pink bananas, now at their best, and after saying goodnight to Madam Wagner, we read from the final chapter of B. L. C.'s Geographical Report. At 7:45 I retired, exhausted.

863

Tuesday, August 25th or 26th, 1941.

The hot bright weather continues.

I went to town with J. H. at 7 A. M. My ankle doesn't seem to be doing so well. I had it treated and the big hen's egg under my left arm pierced. I was glad when that was finished for that day.

J. H. had parked his car in town along side the offices of the Valley electric company of which he is president, and while I waited for him, I could easily overhear the Board meeting that was going on beyond the open windows. Obviously he was putting over some point, and it was interesting to notice the jocular manner in which he pressed the matter, as though it were as important as it might be to record the state of the weather. One member of the Board seemed to object to the proposition, but as the final vote was in a 6 to 1 proportion, it appeared that J. H.'s easy management was as successful as his persuasion of the darkies on any minor plantation matter.

Back home before eleven, Aunt Cammie and I ran through the mail which was brief, after which she lay down for a few minutes before dinner.

Loney came to see me from 12:30 until 1:30. He is such a nice child, it is a great pleasure to see his jet black face whenever it appears on my front gallery. Somehow his personality reminds me of that line: "Few of us have not know some person or person so by Nature lavishly endowed..... and if their's be a true enchantment or not, even the fanatics of Truth care to inquire".....

Aunt Cammie and I worked for a while in the afternoon, and after coffee, I retired, to stretch out my frame and do nothing for the balance of the day.

864

Wednesday, August 27th, 1941.

Another all blue and gold day.

I got out a flock of letters, including one to Mary Lambdin, in response to one I received from her yesterday, urging me to run over to Edgewood, to lend my presence and ideas to the further landscaping of Mistletoe.

At nine I went to the big house to work with Aunt Cammie, but just as coffee was being poured, J. H. appeared in the gardens with Pilgrims, and sent word to me, asking that I take them off his hands. I did. They were a Miss Wurling(?) and a Miss somebody from Dallas. As they told me, they were interested in everything, I felt the field too vast to cover thoroughly, - especially as I stand but with difficulty, and so our tour was brief.

Returning to the big house, I found Dan had come in to chat, and after that the mail arrived, and so, with a couple of business letters taken up in response to pressing needs for books, we let our work on the Johnson papers go for the morning.

I stopped by the Shop, where Mrs. Wagner was working to lend her the typewriter for the balance of the morning as she seemed unable to make a go of it with the one already in the Shop. She spoke to me of Kansas where she was born and educated. She said it had been founded by Abolitionists, and that their dour and straight-laced spirit had continued in Kansas down through succeeding generations. She said that she had had no means of realizing this until after she had married and moved away to Natchitoches where she raised her son. When it was time for him to go to College, she ~~xx~~ and Mr. Wagner had wished him to graduate from their Alma Mater, - the University of Kansas, and that Mr. Wagner had suggested that Mrs. Wagner take that opportunity to get her Master's degree from that institution. He had offered to provide the financial outlay, but that she had written to ask if she could ~~xx~~ secure an appointment as instructor in the college, and to her surprise, within two or three weeks, she had received her appointment. And so she and her son had gone to the University together, - and it was only then, after the interim of years, that she realized how straightlaced the place still was.

After dinner, Mrs. Wagner went back to town, after her week-end stay at Melrose. Aunt Cammie and I did some work and I spent the balance of the afternoon doing nothing, - keeping flattened out in bed, and listening to the radio for lack of anything better to do. I was impressed when a news flash announced the attempted assassination of Pierre Laval, and others, in German occupied France. Old Laval seems to have supported Hitler policy in France. and his

865

Wednesday, August 27th, 1941 - page 2.

his passing would be no great loss for the general happiness of that Nation, I believe. The assassination, however, is more important than the death of one man, - it is a straw in the wind

interruption

a rising tide of resentment which physical force can probably hold down but for a limited time. I reckon this also represents the first crack in the enormous structure of conquered Europe wherein other cracks will automatically begin to appear from time to time, none sufficiently great to wreck the edifices, but each new one representing a growing weakness which, when the foundation itself gives way, will indicate the lines along which the crumbling will begin.

And so the World stumbles along its stupid course, and if it is true that peoples get the kind of government they deserve, then surely it would seem that we don't seem to rate anything noticeably better than we did several thousand years back.

866

Thursday, August 28th (?), 1941.

The day began fair enough, and ran through its course until mid afternoon without a cloud, after which the storms came and the floods descended.

Our routine was much as of yesterday, and after an early trip to town,--Davis driving me in Dan's car, I returned home before nine o'clock, greatly relieved as to my several maladies which though still as painful as yesterday were somehow of little or no importance since I understood their cause and treatment the better. The medical attention, too, seemed to flow from a human being and a physician rather than from the accustomed cross between a hocus-pocus and a gip artist.

There was mail of sorts but only of sorts, and nothing of especial moment.

At five when I jumped into the tub for a bath no water was forth coming from the faucet. Being underserved, I merely went out on the front gallery from the eaves of which cascaded torrents, and there had a rain water shower and shave. It was a little odd, and probably would have been slightly startling to wandering Pilgrims had any been braving such a shower of rain.

The Reidheimers and children were here for supper. And after they had left Dan and I sat in the Madam's room with her chatting for a while. It is so rare to see Eugene after supper that his unexpected appearance made me sit up and take notice. He said that a message had just come in from Melville that Mr. Saxon was on the train arriving at ten o'clock. And so I said good night to Aunt Cammie and busied myself the balance of the evening arrangin my papers and transferring certain effects from one end of the garden to the other so that he might have his house in order and repose for just himself. A drizzling rain didn't help out in my flights back and forth across the garden, now did my ankle feel the better for the exercise.

m Lyle arrived about 10:30, and we chatted for an hour or so before saying good night.

867

~~Friday, August~~
Friday, August 22 29th, 1941.

Everything seemed so clean and new washed this morning after last evening's shower.

I got out a flock of letters, did a couple of rounds in the front gardens, and by nine o'clock was at work with Aunt Cammie.

Celeste had sent word that she was going to town and would be glad to take me any place I wanted to go. I didn't want to go any place, but I took time out to go and thank her. She seemed tired and rebellious and in a mood to try to justify herself for casting about for a servant to occupy the place May used to hold. I felt sorry for her. Intellectually incapable of companionship with her husband and cut off by him from physical contacts of a ~~man~~ conjugal nature, this poor creature flies from pillar to post, generously provided with money, object of polite but total indifference on the part of her husband, a fine car of her own to go from card party to card party and from afternoon party to party. I don't know what you can do for such people.

After dinner Aunt Cammie and I worked together for an hour, after which visitors came to take up her time and strength, and I retired for an hour, going to Lyle's at five for a highball before supper.

I was tired for no especial reason, and about 11 folded up.

868

Saturday, Aug. 30th, 1941.

Frank arrived with coffee at 5:15. We had quite a chat. He told me that he had recently learned that Tony and two other youths in Alexandria, had been arrested and fined \$10.00 - or ten days - for drunkenness. He said May had written him about it, and had told him she wouldn't give her brother the ten dollars and that he had accordingly been spending his time in jail. He is supposed to get out on Sunday. I didn't tell Frank that I had already heard about his jail sentence.

Henry arrived about 5:30. He said the truck was going to town at six. I said I would be out front before then.

I accordingly joined Fugabou and the others who were going to town, and arrived there about seven. I returned to Melrose before 8:30, riding down with Paynie after having had my ankle and arm fixed up. The truck was picking up a couple of armchairs which had just been re-finished but I didn't bother trying to establish contact with it.

On my return, Aunt Cammie and I did a little work from the Johnson papers. Charles came in for a chat. Things on Little River seem to be into his hair. He told me he was so much enjoying the Rutledge Book, Home By the River, which we had loaned him. There was but one element in it, he said that disturbed him: the author's affection for his colored people. Charles said the negro was the curse of the South. I ~~can't~~ can't quite picture the South without that "curse". Strange how Charles, born and bred in Louisiana, has no comprehension of such a large majority of the population, and particularly the very people with whom he must live in daily contact if he is to live on and operate his Little River Farm, tucked away in the lost reaches of that region wherein he appears to be the only white man in miles. I must say that the more I contemplate it, the more I realize that living with certain races certain doesn't qualify some people to speak with any understanding of them. Inheritance and environment seem to play no part whatsoever in some cases I know so far as having any idea as to how relations may be maintained between the blacks and the whites.

At dinner Pat seemed in quite a gay frame of mind. He said most of his baseball team had returned from Alexandria. He said Peter, McKinley, Levee and Junior had returned this morning and the Buddy Red and somebody else would be back tomorrow. It must be five or six days that they have been there. Poor children, I'm glad they are back on their own Cane River soil where they at least have a sense of home and are thus saved from the heart and homesickness so many darkies experience when they desert the plantation for the town.

869

Saturday, August 30th, 1941 - page 2.

After dinner Aunt Cammie and I went over to Lyle's for a little while. He read us the letter I had received in today's mail from Elizabeth Brandon Statton. As always it was extraordinary, and all three of us got quite a laugh out of it.

I tried to lie down between three and four, but Joe Rocque came to call and Elam passed by and before I knew it, five o'clock had struck, and so I went through a shave and a shower, and so after a highball with Lyle, on to supper.

After that, Aunt Cammie had three or four darkies, - Timite, Bluff, Mat Frank and I don't know the rest, hold a ladder up to the pillar in the white garden, so I could stand on the top of it, in order that Lyle might see if it will carry a life size statue. Mat went up, too, after I had come down. Lyle and I thought that a life size would be imperative, - certainly nothing smaller.

I forgot to say that Edward had dropped by before supper. He said he was leaving tomorrow for Alexandria for a job.

After a tour of the gardens, accompanied by big and little grandpa and four dachunds, all as curious as a mule, seemingly disdainful of what we were up to, and yet at the same time acting as though we must have lost our minds, they moved along sedately,--at least the cats did, while the dogs continued to romp and tumble all over the place.

Eight o'clock and we said good night to Aunt Cammie, and for a while sat in the white garden which was pretty enough under the waxing moon. It was fairly late when I said goodnight, and after a short walk, I retired.

870

Monday, Sept. 1st, 1949.

Labor Day, and as usual but few people labored. For one, I didn't.

I didn't feel too physically fit, and so I remained in the house the major part of the day, save for an hour or two in the morning and the afternoon when Aunt Cammie and I worked together.

The balance of the day I tried to get sleep without much success, although doing anything else was a great waste of time since the pain in my left arm and right ankle made the waking hours ~~xx~~ ~~at~~ hideous. After supper Lyle and I took a short walk to the bridge, and after our return from the saloon, we sat with Aunt Cammie for a while.

After saying good night to her, we sat for a while in the white garden, a setting that seemed unique, thanks to a strange diffused light filtering down from the moon, and spread about the place in such a manner as to make everything from chimney tops on the house to the great ~~xxxx~~ plum like leaves of the bananas all seem as though caught together and inter-woven by a tangled skein of dripping gossamer threads. Mists fell and evaporated, and it rained a little while we sipped a drink on the upper terrace of the sunken garden. We were wet with moisture and with moonlight, and yet so gradually dampened and so much a part of the prevailing atmosphere that our state of clamminess seemed entirely harmonious with the rest of creation.

Before eleven we said good night, and Grandpa, galloping behind me, followed the path toward home.

871

Tuesday, Sept. 2nd, 1941.

I awoke at 3, and from then until nearly five, lay in bed listening to the down pour outside. When Frank arrived it was time for me to be up and dressing, which I did after my first cup of coffee, and thence to car at the side gate, which I reached completely soaked. Lyle arrived five minutes later, and with Fugabou driving, we headed toward Derry and the train to take Lyle back to New Orleans.

Returning home by seven, I had breakfast and a bath, and afterward knocked off a number of letters before nine when Aunt Cammie and I worked until nearly eleven.

We continued our labors after dinner, and afterward, thanks to the downpour and my sleepiness, I took a nap, and then worked a little on my hedge, clipping in spite of the rain, and moving in some more old bricks with the help of Peter and Elam.

After supper Aunt Cammie and I read for a while from *Flush Times* in Alabama and Mississippi. We found the chapter on Sargent Prentiss excellent. We were struck by the reference to Prentiss deformity in his leg, too, for in the Johnson Diary, the colored man had mentioned Prentiss' name in 1848, and at the same time had drawn a sketch of a man with a huge bulge just below his knee. I don't know of many diarists who made sketches in their Journal as they slid from sentence to sentence, and now to observe the Johnson really appears to have had in mind putting in salient features as well as making idle pen sketches, the Diary seems the more remarkable.

872

Wednesday, Sept. 3rd, 1941.

It was drizzling when I awoke, and it continued to drizzle until well after I had finished my mail about eight o'clock.

J. H. told me last night that he would be going to town on Thursday, and I planned to ride with him. A little after eight this morning, however, he sent a message saying the estate car was driving Dan to town, and asked if I would like to go. I would. And I went.

In town, while getting fixed up, - my ankle and all, - it, the drizzle which had ceased began again.

I waited on 2nd Street for the car. It began to pour. It continued to pour. The water rose to the top of the gutters, and then came over them and covered the side walks and then into the stores. Cars stalled in the middle of the street. Court was going on across the street, but litigants sat in the middle of the thoroughfare, - marooned in their cars, - so near the seat of Justice and yet so far.

I stood around and got soaked, while, as I discovered later, Len, the driver, stood across the street, waiting for me to cross.

There were guests for dinner back at Melrose, and dinner we had, and after they had gone, Aunt Cammie and I worked on the Kate Johnson Diary, a limited volume, but brimming over with evidences of unexpected delicacies of feeling, of which, I presume, there is little if any parallel in any negro diaries of the 1864 - 1866 era. Aside from her own severe appraisal of her personality, the poor thing was obviously in love with her sister, Anna's, beau. Then too, she asked herself if after all the other humiliations she had endured, - the color line, I suppose, she asked if she must also suffer the ultimate one of poverty. This was in an 1866 entry when conditions in Natchez for white and colored must have been rather trying.

When we were done, I returned home, and one or two of Pat's baseball team members followed me, - Peter, who wanted to mow the terraces in the sunken garden, Ram Loney who wanted to renew old acquaintances after a week's absence back on the bayou, and Elam who wanted to come along on general principles.

After supper, Aunt Cammie read from *Flush Times* in Miss. and at eight we said good night and I went to bed instead of taking a walk as I wanted to. But the rains had made the roads too impossible for skipping mud-puddles, in spite of what the moon had contrived to do by way of lighting up the lane.

873

Thursday,, September 4th, 1941.

Lyle's birth day, and a very pretty one it is too.

It certainly seems good to be abl to pull around the gardens a little without getting bogged down.

I had callers early this morning, Elam and somebody else and Levee, - all with time on their hands waiting for the cotton to dry out a bit in the morning sun before trying to pick some cotton.

Aunt Cammie and I worked together both morning and afternoon on Katharine Johnson's Diary. It seems equally remarkable, as compared with her fathers, and altogether quite different, his being primarily a day to day account of business and recreational doings in the late 1840's, while hers is primarily the mental reactions to family and social situations during the closing years of the Civil War. The thoughts expressed are so far from the usual colored reactions to life that one would scarcely belief her to be a member of an old colored family, even though the family itself was outstanding in the colored ~~xx~~ community.

She seems to give no hint of her sympathies with either the Union or Confederate side, although one little episode early in 1865 indicates that she found the Federal troops a little taking in their ways, for she baked a number of pies for sale, and the boy who was to dispose of them, peddled them in the ranks of Union forces recently arrived in Natcoez, and these soldiers stole every pie from him save one.

Sam Brown seems to have gone to Alexandria for good, at least no one has heard from him since he left early in the week. I used to wonder why they called aitting a place without announcing any intention to do so, as French Leve. From what I observe, it would appear that it is an old negro custom, although possibly it was acquired by them from the French who once lived in this region. Any way Sam has gone, and Puny has gone too, and others are leaving this week-end, although I learn of the latter only through the grapevine, and I have promised to say nothing.

We read from Shields' Life of Sargent Prentiss after supper. Pat went to the movies with some of the colored boys. After 8:30, I took to the big road, walking as far as the bridge. I saw no one but Levee. I guess every one else had gone in for entertainment. Awaking at 3 A.M., I again walked. It was grand.

874

Friday, Sept. 5th, 1941.

Another day without excessive rain,--just a little around 11 o'clock, but not enough to interrupt cotton picking.

In the morning before the dew was off a few of the boys came by to see me, - Levee and Toot and Mattie's cousin, whom I don't know!

They tell me that the cotton is very thin, and that one travels far to get but a few pounds. Everyone appears to be able to pick about half as much as in seasons when there is a good crop. I'm afraid they will not get much more than 75 cents a day at their labor under present circumstances, and this will preclude any opportunity for such things as winter clothes, the usual gew-gaws, etc including frolics at the saloon for which most of them look forward to cotton time each year.

Aunt Cammie and I continued our labors of Katharine Johnson's Diary, both in the morning and in the afternoon. Temite continues painting the big house with one or two helpers. I went to Felix to have a hair cut this morning. He told me Henry had asked him to take him to the train at Montrose last Sunday. Henry told him he had a job in Oklahoma City, that Mrs. Scott's brother was taking him there in the man's car, and that Henry would remain in Oklahoma City on the job if he liked it, other ise he would write to the Madam to send him his fare back to Melrose. No word from Sam who left for Alexandria on Tuesday, - taking French leave.

There was a letter from Robina in today's mail, the first we had received in over a week. What with guests to entertain, and a prolonged week-end, she seems to have been kept busy, which is readily understood when one considers the demands of her office, etc., and yet a mail she arrives without bringing a note from her seems a dull mail and one we regret.

After supper and reading from the Sargent biography, or rather the Sargent Prentiss biography, I thought of taking a short walk, but clouds were piling up in the south and lightening flashes dissuaded me, and so I fell into bed a little after eight instead.

875

Saturday, Sept. 6th, 1941.

Another beautiful day, with no rain at all,-- just all blue sky with great white puffs of clouds which never did obscure the sun.

Frank was a little later this morning,--five thirty or a little later. I guess the days must be growing shorter, and this accounts for the routine which seems a little behind all along the line, for Temite didn't bring my breakfast tray until nearly seven instead of 6:20 as usual. Peter arrived as Temite was leaving,--just an early morning call, I guess, and for no reason other than the hopes of a cup of coffee.

After Aunt Cammie and I had worked together for an hour between nine and ten, on returning home, I found Levee waiting for me. He wanted to help me do some gardening. He was bare footed, and his feet seemed large, for at 16 his measurements far exceed those of a person twice his age. On second thought, however, I recall that Levee really is "most 16", as he explained to me in July, for at that time, while hoping to get a job in Alexandria he had told me he was about 16, his 16th birthday having been noted on the 23rd of June.

I fear he left feeling some thing like a female infant of ancient Chinese parentage and vaguely subjected to the curious custom of bound up feet, but darkies are forever swapping one thing for another, and in the end he may break the bonds to his advantage.

R Loney came by at 12:30, and read for me from mail that had come yesterday. He is a sweet child.

At three Peter came back and wanted to help me. There is always a movie up the river at Ashely's on Saturday's. It's amazing how industrious the boys get in the afternoon of movie days. I'm glad they have movies there but thrice a week. Peter helped me. And later Elam came by and he wanted to help me, and he did. And after supper, as Aunt Cammie and I were reading in her room a little before eight, the electric current was interrupted. We chatted,--she and Pat, and Dan who had come in at the moment and I,--sitting there in semi-darkness, for a good moon had risen out behind the bindery. After half an hour, I said goodnight, and walked to the saloon, where dozens of darkies graced the front, the inside being pitch dark, what with the current still off. I returned home almost immediately, and went to bed. I was disturbed about 11:30, discovered the electric fan had resumed operation, and so went back to sleep.

876

Sunday, Sept. 7th, 1941.

The morning opened cloudless and beautiful.

Frank didn't arrive until nearly six with coffee. Bluff brought breakfast about 7. The short days are certainly setting in.

Bluff pattered about until nearly eight, and then came little Mr. Brew, looking as though he were just back from the wars,--his right hand in a bandage and his left toe split open. He told me he had cut his finger on a razor while doing "an monkey shines" before a mirror, and that later he had had to climb a tree when Frank's dog had come after him, and that in jumping down he had struck something and hurt his toe. At ten or eleven, he has a personality that suggests that of a person of 30 or 40. He is as remarkable a little colored boy as I have seen since Harry disappeared. I must ask about Harry,--who, I suppose is living in Cloutierville with his kin-folk.

Aunt Cammie and I worked for a little while in the morning, finishing the Katherine Johnson Diary. It certainly rivals her father's in importance, although there is no comparison between the two, as William T. Johnson is a record of facts regarding his daily life, while Katherine's sets down the inner-most thoughts of a soul tormented by unhappiness,--a written in such a fashion as to reveal a soul of unique sensitivity..

Before dinner, Aunt Cammie napped, while I worked a little in my garden, Levee helping me a little, and sleeping afterwards. Elam and Peter alternated by playing with Pat and his ball team and with calls on me. The rains came about four o'clock, and the children retired to the African House to play. I napped a little, too, and listened for quite a time to Frank who evidently had been indulging a bit in good cheer.

About 4:30 Mrs. Lillian Blair called and remained with Aunt Cammie for ever so long. Her volume, White Pillars, she says is selling very well. I am glad, such books usually don't. It seems it went through the 1st printing of 1x2 two thousand copies almost immediately.

The President's mother, Sarah Delano Roosevelt, died today, according to the radio. We read but little tonight, talking about the Roosevelts, particularly about Dame Sarah and Eleanor and the counter grain of their personalities.. I was asleep by a little after eight.

877

Monday, Sept. 8th, 1941.

It was military day at Melrose.

The day opened clear, but even before it opened, trucks, tanks and motorcycles had roared up and down the roads long before dawn.

A little after x six, battallions of tanks had lined up before the store and the garage, and hungry soldiers were buying out the canned foods and bottle goods, impatient for the breakfast wh ch was being prepared in the hay field back on the bayou.

When Frank arrived with coffee he told me that some soldiers were stretched out asleep on the store gallery, for it seems the army had been moving all night, and as Melrose was the place selected for camp, early arrivals had thrown themselves where ever they might to recuperate a little from their long trek from their last camping ground.

Aunt Cammie and I worked in the morning and the afternoon, but we accomplished little what with all the excitement that went on both inside and outside, for while the tank corps was manoeuvring on Melrose, the big house was in some spirit of expectancy regarding the arrival of Aunt Cammie's eldest son, Stephen, - now a General, the man, according to life, whose back-breaking job it was to organize this branch of the service.

Levee came by in the morning, and helped x me with a gate in my fence which needed tighening.

interruption.

About 2 o'clock, to huge bombers flew over the house. They were tremendous and their roar terrific. They flew so low I thought they would shave off the chimney of the big house.

Apparantly they circled to the East a little later, for word came through that in bombing a pontoon bridge at Montgomery, some 7 or 8 miles away on ~~East~~ Red River, a propellor of one had clipped the high power lines that fed this part of Natchitoches Parish. Our lights were severed between 3 and 4 o'clock in the afternoon. No electricity ot pump water for the houses, no lights, and no current for the ice boxes, either here or at the saloon where the supply of meats, ice cream, etc., must have automatically started for decay, since their would be no current for the balance of today at least.

878

Monday, Sept. 8th, 1941.

About supper time Pat came to see kx me. He said that early in the afternoon a big tank, while trying to cross the wooden bridge over Bayou Brevelle on the Montrose Lane had crashed through the middle of it and fallen some 20 feet. A second tank, in trying to rescue it, had also become involved in the same difficulty, and then a third and a fourth. After supper, Celeste and Mrs. Regard drove us down to see the mess. It was one, although by sun down all the tanks were out save one on which they were working then. We didn't stay to see the outcome. The bridge was cut through exactly in the middle, as clean as a knife might cut a huge slab of pie.

Aunt Cammie and I returned with Harold in his truck, while the rest remained to the bitter end. On our return, we rigged up a coal oil (Kerosene lamp), and read until eight from Bishop Girod's new volume, - Cradle dayd of St. Mary's of Natchez. It was a hot night, and of course the electric fans were more decorative pieces of furniture than of any practical use.

I took a little walk afterwards, going as far as the bridge to sit for a little while to watch the rixsing moon about ine o'clock, - and so home, - in d rkness, - to bed.

879

Tuesday, Sept. 9th, 1941.

The day dawned clear ~~xx~~ and the sun seemed new-washed by the heavy dew. We could stand all the light it could give in the early morning, for the electricity was still off.

About 7 I went to the store with the mail. French who runs a camp some miles up Bermuda way on Cane River, drove up just as I came through the front gate. Having heard that Stephen had been expected today, he had gone out early this morning and hauled in a dozen or more good sized ~~x~~ fish.--I noticed a splendid trout weight at least 4 or 5 pounds. He said they were for the General's supper.

I drove to town with J. H. His sense of humor is so good, based on assumed simplicity, that it is always exhilarating to be with him in the car, for ~~xx~~ that is the only place he ever stays put long enough to talk much with him.

In town, before arriving at our destination, he encountered one or two people in cars on the main streets. Each wanted to discuss some point of business with him or he with them. They merely stopped dead still in the middle of the street, backing up or going forward from time to time as other cars approached and needed space to continue their route.

I told him such methods reminded me of an old lady I had often observed on the streets of Charleston, S. C. She was a remarkable personality. For perhaps 75 or 80 years she had lived on a plantation outside the city some miles. Once she had been a belle and possessed of some financial standing. The years had gone by, however, sapping her beauty, both of body and bank-roll. But ~~inx~~ in the old days, being something of a personality of some importance, both in her own mind, and that of the trades people in town, it had been her custom to dive in behind a splendid pair of horses, stop her carriage in front of one store and another, and without deigning to descend from her seat, have the merchants bring their wares out to the curb for her inspection and selection. With the passing of the years, her agile black coachman had crumbled and bent, and the fine horses had withered and died, being replaced by a Ford of ancient vintage. The lady herself had greatly altered through the years, but she had held on to a costume of the Godey era, and she still held herself very straight as she spread her old alpaca in rumpled folds on ~~x~~ either side of her, so as to cover the entire back seat. And for that reason, I know not, and perhaps for no reason at all, save from habit, the merchants continued to respect her prerequisite of examining their merchandise from her elevated seat where ever the car stopped at the curb, even though her purchasing power had so diminished to such a point that by no stretch of the imagination could she possibly recompense them for all their trouble in dragging out bolts of cloth for her delectation, after which she might buy twenty-five cents worth of gingham.

880

Tuesday, Sept. 9th, 1941.

Many a time I have seen her car wheeze down King Street, falter a little and then stop at the curb in front of a department store, ~~x~~. Her coachman or chauffeur, or whatever, would descend and stand by the front door of the dilapidated old rattle-trap. He never went into the store to announce the arrival of his Mistress. Everybody in Charles, without seeming to notice her extraordinary appearance, sensed she had arrived. And immediately some member of the store's staff would appear, bow with a slightly exaggerated courtesy, attend her wishes and then pass the word along to an assistant who would have whatever line of merchandise brought out that might tempt the lady's fancy. Imperiously she would regard the stuff ~~xxx~~ from her high but vaguely uncertain seat in the rear of the old car. After due examination and a few appropriate and slightly queenly if not actually patronizing remarks, she would make her selection, pass a coin from her old purse, and receive the parcel which scurrying clerks, enchanted at this opportunity for play acting, had scurried about to wrap up for her. With these ceremonies concluded, the ancient servitor would hobble around to the front of the car, crank the old thing a few times, hesitate for a second before it, as his coughed and passed through a momentary spasm, and then fly around to the cumbersome gear shifts on ~~xx~~ on the front seat, leap in the car, and with a grind of gears and a tremendous snort, the old contraption would give a wrenching leap, the old lady's head would fly back, as in slow motion, for she was obviously braced against its eccentricity, and off this remarkable cortege would stagger, lost in a cloud of the smoking exhaust.

I was glad that J. H. had thus transacted his business from car to car in town, for it brought back the memories of this ancient belle of Charleston and the memory was diverting.

It poured while we were in town, but back home by eleven o'clock, we discovered it hadn't rained at Melrose. It began pouring about noon, however, and grew quite dark, but we ate without lights, as the electricity was still off. It came back on about 2 o'clock in the afternoon,--some 22 hours or so after it had been cut by the bombers yesterday.

General Stephen Henry arrived for late dinner, along with his son, Stephen, Jr. I wish I might talk more with him about the Army. He says the morale is bad. There are a number of reasons, he feels. If the army is to be kept happy, life for the soldier should be made more desirable than life as the soldier would know it in civilian life could be. I suppose that is one secret of success in the totalitarian states where the soldier has an edge over any civilian. ~~Hxx~~ Stephen feels, too, that a vast number of the officers are not properly fitted for their jobs. It is almost impossible to select so petant men for such jobs within the time limits during which the present army has been created, almost from scratch.

881

Tuesday, Sept. 9th, 1941.

He says one difficulty is in finding leaders, no matter if the officer be of high or low degree. He remarked that General Pershing was never a leader, but he was quite satisfactory as a General, in spite of this fact, because while he couldn't lead his men, he could drive them, and if one is deficient in the one cardinal attribute for an officer, the driving power is about the next best as a substitute.

He was shocked by the amount of drunknesses going on in the Army ranks in this locality during the War Games. He was equally shocked that the tanks yesterday should have been permitted to use Bayou Brevelle bridge before the engineers had definitely established the fact that the bridge itself was of adequate strength to support the weight of these armored cars. He said someone would catch Hell for such incompetence.

I hope I can talk with him some more before he leaves.

Peter came over to help me in the afternoon. Elam came too, and so did Mr. Brew. The rain had killed cotton picking for the day and Pat had a flock of colored boys in front of the African House for a continuous game of baseball.

Supper and afterwards a little chat in Aunt Cammie's room, and then a little turn in the big road, - much too dark, for I floundered through more than one puddle and fell over on half grown pig, and so back home, and to bed.

882

Wednesday, ~~xx~~ & September 10th, 1941.

Another military day at Melrose, with tanks and trucks of the Army thundering by. I noticed one new note today, however. The turkey which Celeste has been fattening in the woodyard has been moved to a coop behind her house, nearer the public road down which the tanks thunder. Everytime one passes, - and hundreds of them pass in a string, the old gobbler, - or at least big gobbler, if not old, gobbles in wild protest. Let one more day of this parade kept up and the poor gobbler will have to be sent back to fatten up again, for his incessant gobbling is bound to wear him down.

The General left this morning about six o'clock to observe the manoeuvres "somewhere in Louisiana". He hopes to be back again on Friday. In the mean time Stephen, Jr., remains at Melrose and he and Pat passed the day on horseback and in hunting. Blue jays were first on their list, but I guess that soon grew pretty tame, and so they went down to the spill way later, along the route which the reptiles take in crossing the road from the stream to the lake. Here they concentrated on moccasins.

Aunt Cammie and I worked a little together, and among other things adjusted the illustrations and notes for B. L. C. Wailes' Diary, put the whole business in order and packed it up for the book binder in San Antonio.

In the evening we read from Cradle Day of St. Mary's in Natchez, and were impressed by the fact that according to the author, (interruption).

I forget what I had in mind to record, but one thing in the book which seemed unique was the account of Hutchin's son-in-law, Voosden, who prayed the Catholic Bishop of Baltimore, Carroll, to permit a Protestant clergyman to hold services in the Natchez Catholic Church, in view of the fact that there was no priest in that neighborhood. Voosden, being a Catholic, seems to have felt that even a non-Catholic might to the Romanist flock some good if he would only conduct a Protestant service on the Altar of the Roman Church. Curious doings, as usual, on the part of the Natchezans.

I went to bed early, and was chilly, since Grandpa rambled afield and didn't grace my feet as in his custom, - at least on warm nights.

883

Thursday, Sept. 11th, 1941.

The dawn was disturbed again by the rumble of trucks and protestations from Celeste's turkey as they back-fired and banged along in an endless stream.

It was a good day, and the warmth of the sunshine balanced nicely against the lower temperatures which seep down from the Rocky Mountains away to the North West where the radio reports freezing temperatures.

After getting out my mail, I joined Aunt Cammie at the big house about 8 o'clock. I was struck by the re-appearance of her uniform,--black skirt and white shirt waste, after her summer costume of white throughout.

Celeste was waiting at the side gate, and the three of us drove across the river. I got out at Zeline's while the ladies continued on up the river road to Madame Aubin-Rocques.

At Zeline's, I chatted a little while with her and Madame Madelain. I was surprised to find her on Cane River at this time, she is so frightened of the soldiers, and I kidded her a little about it. Zeline wasn't doing so well, although up and about and, as always, ready to chuckle about her infirmities.

I walked back home, chatting for a few moments in the big road with "Mr." Brew who is still looking as though just back from the wars. I regretted that I remarked about his nicely starched little blue shirt, for as I did so, he cautiously moved the sling suspending his right arm so that it would cover the long rent from top to bottom. I tried to cast my eyes in the direction of the cotton fields as the white bandage moved stealthily over the rent in the pale blue revealing the deep chocolate beneath his chest.

In the afternoon I worked in my garden, weeding portulacka, etc., and mowing both terraces. Peter came by and helped me for a little while.

I suppose he is as sweet a child as I have ever known, save about three o'clock, when he goes by. He wanted to tell me possibly that he was going to work for 6 weeks, beginning Sunday. I said he was my lady of the lamp. And so we said goodbye, and afterward I worked in my garden, and after supper, Aunt Cammie and I read from last night's volume, and at eight o'clock listened to the President play piratic practices of Nazi U-boats. As always his radio personality was convincing and stimulating, regardless of subject matter. I retired at nine o'clock.

Later, I listened to a broadcast from Des Moines before 6,000 people, in which Charles Lindberg said but 3 elements were undertaking to get America into the war,--England, the Jews and the Roosevelt Administration. He didn't say so, but one gathered he preferred a world dominated by Hitler to one dominated by the British Empire, as though there were but the 3 elements.

884

Friday, Sept. 12th, 1941.

A quiet day at Melrose with a sky that was all blue and gold.

After getting out a batch of mail before seven, I got out another batch between nine and ten, and I was impressed again as so often before by Aunt Cammie's enthusiasm for things outside her immediate surroundings. This is one of her unique qualities. She had seen a note in the Times Picayune about a new Chart showing the newly dredged waterway from the Gulf of Mexico to Calcasieu Pass or the Sabine Pass, and wanted one sent for her collection of Maps. I can think of few people in the world, so interested in a variety of things, who would likewise be interested in this type of thing too.

We worked until nearly eleven, and back home I did some gardening. Elam came by to help me out a little, and Peter came before he left.

After dinner I re-arranged the garden a little, moving the pedestal and urn, and re-clipped the hedges. Afterward I joined Aunt Cammie for cold drinks and hot coffee.

After supper, The General came. It was good to be able to talk with him a little, just fresh, as he was, from spending a couple of days watching manoeuvres. He said that in the Army it was obvious that the soldiers and officers, newly inducted, I suppose, from the Middle West states are much more averse to Army training and much more against America doing anything to assist in stopping Hitler than any other section of the country,--the East and West Coasts and the South seeming to comprehend that American cannot live behind a tight little fence while the rest of the world is dominated by the Nazis. Last night he said that a Mr. McCook or a Mr. Cook sat in with the officers when they listened to the President's speech. Mr. Cook(?) had been Dwight Morrow's best man at his wedding, and was intimately acquainted with the Morrow family, including Mrs. Charles Lindberg, whom, he told Stephen, found it increasingly difficult to live with her husband, and that she contemplated a break.

The General said that he had been shocked by the doings of the officers and men as he had observed some of their doings during the past 24 hours. For example, there is to be a dance in Natchitoches on Saturday night. On Friday afternoon, Officers, in Government cars, were already starting out for the dance, although they were stationed by 30 or 40 miles from the town where it was to be given. This obviously gave the officers, as they figured it, at least, a whole day to frolic in Government cars before the dance itself was scheduled to begin. I think these manoeuvres will show a lot of things about the daily life of the soldier other than the part they play in military operations. The General says that the country is about half hearted as to the advisability of war but that the President could engineer one if he wanted to, but that the resulting apathy on the part of the Army might lead to serious results.

885

Saturday, Sept. 13th, 1941.

I slept so well last night, I was ready to arise at 4 o'clock. At this hour and at this season, it is still dark, but thanks to day light savings arrangements in other localities,--which we do not have here, one can get good news broadcasts from the Atlantic Coast states at 6 a.m. at Melrose which is 6 o'clock in Charlotte, North Carolina, New York City and other points which broadcast news bulletins at that hour.

About 6:30 I heard a faint toot from the direction of the gin, x, followed by a puff-puff, indicating that seeds would soon be flying in that direction. Contrary to habit at this season, one notices the operation of the gin this year, it operates so infrequently, - thanks to the devastation by the cotton worm.

Peter Came b to see me early, and when I took my mail to the store I met Charles Mazurette who was just driving up in his buggy from Little River. He had brought Rutledges' Home By The River with him, having bo rowed it a little while back. He told me how much he had enjoyed it, save for those parts in which Rutledge speaks with kindness of his negroes. Charles seems so wrought up against the darkies on his place that the mere mention of the colored race makes him extremely unhappy. . Poor Charles, - and putting himself five or six miles back from a main highway, with nothing but colored neighbors for miles around.

Aunt Cammie and I had coffee together, and later when I returned to Lyle's to do some gardening, Clestes came over to chat for a little while. She told me that she was going to prepare a lunch for me to take a long on my purposed hike tomorrow back beyond Little River, thus giving the Henry's a chance to have a field day all by themselves at the Sunday board, for Dan came up from Baton Rouge last night for the week-end, Joe arrived about noon from Beaumont, Texas, and Payne and his wife, J. H. and Celeste, Stephen and his wife and child and the Winks will all be here on the morrow.

After Celeste had gone, Loney came by unexpectedly. He told me he had be-stirred himself early this morning to iron his clothes which he wants to take with him when he leave on Sunday with his brother, Edward, for his job in Mansura. Loney at 16 getting his ironing done, in spite of the fact that he has a step-mother who is kind to him. I asked him how he heated the irons, and he said he just put them in the fireplace until they were hot, then kept an old cloth handy to rub off the ashes from them before he began pressing out his shirts. .

886

Saturday, Sep. 13th, 1941 - page 2.

It made me realize again that rural electrification is a grand institution for those who can enjoy its advantages, in spite of War Games, etc.

Leyee came by before Loney left. I hadn't seen him since Monday. He needed bus fare to get him to Alexandria where he might have a job. He had been too busy picking cotton to get by during the week. Necessity, to took it, is sometimes the mother of social visits.

I worked on my hedges in the afternoon, had a leisurely bath, saw Levee again, and so went to supper, the food being good and the conversation left entirely in the hands of those who had come home for the week-end. I might have been more stimulating, but as monologues go, it wasn't bad.

After Joe and Dan had gone to town, Aunt Cammie and I read until 7:45, when I retired. Airplanes were flying overhead in the dark, and the radio announced that from 500 to 1,000 planes which had been flown to Louisiana for the war games had just been ordered north before the heaviest fighting beings tomorrow night, because storms are raging on the Gulf, and are expected to reach up into this neighborhood by tomorrow, and it seems there are no hangars for such a quantity of planes in th s section and they are accordingly being withdrawn to avoid the possibility of having them all blown away.

887

Sunday, Sept. 14th, 1941.

The clouds were low and gray when Frank arrived at 5:30, and a fine mist spread over the gardens. It didn't look too promising for a day in the open.

Mattie brought my breakfast about 7. I don't know what had happened to all her helpers.

About 8 o'clock I went over to Celeste's. J. H. was just finishing breakfast, and I sat in for a cup of coffee with him. Before going over, Leves had passed by and told me that Walter Dufrene's daughter over in Houston had shot and severely wounded her husband and killed herself last night and the Dufrenes were at the store telephoning Texas. J. H. hadn't heard about it.

Celeste appeared shortly and gave me a generous sized, neat appearing box containing an attractive lunch she had prepared for me. I still don't understand how she came about to prepare it for me, but it was delicious and it was kind of her and I was glad to tuck it under my arm and start out. I never did see any of the Henrys.

Striking down the river road, I turned off toward the cotton and hay fields a little way below Mattie's house, and in half an hour had crossed the bayou and the old hay barn,-- always seeming so out of place so far away from any habitation.

Continuing along the lane, I soon sighted two figures. It was Archilius and his boy, Loney. Loney was starting out for the city to work. The poor child looked so neat in each individual item of his ensemble, and yet none of them seemed to jibe and with his black, black skin, the grays and whites and blues seemed too gray and white and blue. He wore a hat which did not become him and he carried a little satchel like the ones young ladies sometimes sport for their make-up paraphernalia. Somehow he looked so forelorn and so far away as children so often do when just starting on a long journey the goal and pathway to it of which is filled with vast unknowns and mistivings in their mind. I am certainly glad I never witnessed the beginnings of the Children's Crusade, but at least they had a certain strength and assurity in numbers. The three of us chatted for a moment and then said goodby, Archilius and I continuing down the lane toward Little River and poor Loney, with his little sachel and discordant, neat clothes, disappearing down the lane in the opposite road toward the forlorn haybarn, and thence toward what no one knows.

888

Sunday, Sept. 14th, 1941. - page 2.

Archilius and I continued for a mile or two until we reached his house which backs to the lane and faces the steep banks of the bayou. A long gallery runs across the front, and immediately before the gallery is a neat little garden to either side of the walk going down from the steps to the gate, on either side of which generous sized alphas bloomed in vast profusion. Borders of iris demarked the limites of the two little plots and larger trees, - crepe myrtle, etc., stood farther away.

We chatted for a little while, - plantation colored people, children, etc., etc., while his wife busied herself a little apart further along the gallery. About half an hour later she went into the house, and shortly after returned to the gallery, carrying two cups, - one small white one and one large blue one on a dinner plate. On a second plate were a sugar bowl and a pitcher. I took the large blue cup of black Louisiana coffee, a little sugar and no milk. Archilius finished first, and I believe his wife came to get the cup so that she might have some coffee, too. Somehow I gathered that the household boasted of but two cups, but I am not sure.

Shortly afterward, Archilius' daughter appeared at the end of the gallery, carrying her baby (I believe Log is the papa) and with her came Henry Hertzong with whom she now lives, or rather whose cabin she now lives in since Henry is working in Alexandria. Henry said he liked carpentry in Alexandria. I asked him if he had made a round at the big house yet. He said he hadn't. I told him that Mr. Stephen was there, knowing that he had always admired him. The three of us talked a little while the women busied themselves in the house. Henry stretched himself out on a bench and said he was going to sleep a little. I arose to go and offered my hand to Henry. He took it without bothering to arise from his reclining position which he had just assumed, apparently much to his own satisfaction. Ix.

Archilius accompanied me out the front gate and along the bayou as far as the bridge across Little River where we said goodbye. He didn't refer to his newly arrived guests, but he obviously felt embarrassed by Henry's bad manners.

And so I cross the bridge, and followed along the little road along the upper bank of the bayou, passing an old church in front of which sat a dozen or so colored men,-- the preacher, I imagined, from his raiment and one of the pillars of this half forgotten temple of religion,-- rural religion, I guess one might say. The white painted well proportioned school I passed on the right,--one of the WPA buildings which have meant much to the darkies in this remote place, Archilius had told me.

889

Sunday, Sept. 14th, 1941 - page 3.

A little further along where great trees over-
spread the highway, and shadows are the more intense for
the vast banners of swaying moss from their hoary
branches and for the tangle of woods a ways back from the
road on one side and the jungle like growth of lesser trees
and vines along the margin of the bayou. I was enchanted
to see a young couple of colored people, looking doubly
dark in their spick and span Sunday clothes in this green,
dark green setting. I suppose the youth was about 20,
and he seemed like an anachronism in this setting,--his
strawhat was so shiny, ~~xxx~~ his trousers and shoes so
spotlessly white, and his pale blue shirt,-- he was coatless,--
so immaculate. ~~inx~~ On each arm he balanced a colored
off-spring,--one child possibly two and the other three years
old. His wife, also in a white flowered dress and white
shoes was carrying her own hat and the children's, I guess.
They were obviously headed for church, but arrayed as
though for a stroll on any avenue in a great city rather
than a progression along this dusty, tree-draped lane.

When I reached the little foot-bridge leading across the
bayou, I stopped for lunch. I hoped that some poor
darkie would come along to share it with me, but none
appeared. And so, after resting a bit, I continued along
this half forgotten road. At one point I was struck by
the semblance of planting,--vast trees on the side of the road
toward the bayou, and opposite a growth covering two or
three acres which somehow told one with no other assurance
than instinct that here once had stood a great house.
At one time I suppose Little River was navigable and
probably some planter's home stood here in some degree
of opulence in ante-bellum times. Now only the long
banners of moss waved from the trees and the spirit of
the old garden in spirit rather than substance he-spoke
a civilization that had faded from this remote corner of
Louisiana.

I continued a mile or so, passing an occasional
cabin from which an occasional dog came out to bark at me,
and about 2 o'clock I reached Charles Little house, gleaming
white and attractive in the sunshine which had broken
through the clouds momentarily. His garden before the
house bloomed with shrubs and the white plaing about the
lawn set off the place to advantage.

Both inside and out everything looked so neat and
"homey", and it was doubly so when Charles served
coffee and a little later a mixed drink which strongly
suggested a side-car.

Charles discussed his present unhappiness over the
negro problem as he finds it back in the lost country
of his Little River Farm. I was glad to discuss it with him.

890

Sunday, Sept. 14th, 1941 - page 4.

Among other things, he told me that he was sometimes
surprised to discover that the darkies never did seem to
get mad at him if, for example, he turned down their request
for a loan of his mowing machine or someother items of
machinery which he did not want to trust in their hands.
He spoke of their ingratitude, too, and this gave me
an opportunity to air one or two of my theories.

I told him that few of us ever had an opportunity to
practice true charity, and that we ought to thank the
local darkies ~~xxxxxx~~ for the chance they gave us. I ~~xx~~
asked him if he didn't think that usually we give hand-outs
to people as much for the anticipation of pleasure we
would get in an exhibition of their gratitude as for the
actual desire on our part to do smathing for some one. I
confessed that I thought that people lots of time presented
a nice big red apple to a child ~~anx~~ motivated as much
by the anticipated pleasure of seeing the child's pleasurable
re-action as for any desire on our part to actually grati-
fy the desire of the child for the apple.

I told him that I thought it was good for us that
the darkies so frequently deflate us in such ~~xx~~ matters
of our so-called charity, which isn't much more charity
than buying a ticket to a movie show, for in so doing we
put out money in expectation of getting something by
way of visiaal entertainment, and we call that expenditure
for entertainment while in reality we are prompted by
about the same motive when we hand-out something to the
darkie. Fortunately the darkie puts us in our place.
If he tries to get something out of us and we refuse him,
he usually says to himself, - subconsciously, I presume,
"That is Fate, luck ain't with me,--" and lets it go at
that, - harboring no dislike for us because of our parsimony
or good judgement. In that transaction we are merely an
instrument of Fate, and already in advance, Fate has deter-
mined that luck is against the darkie that day. If one
the other hand, the darkie asks for something and gets it,
or if we give him smething out of a clear sky,-- which
we might attribute falsely to a charitable impulse on
our part, the darkie likewise takes us as an instrument of
Fate. He may thank us, but may not, and will probably come
back for more from the same source, feeling that if Fate
is running with him in this instance, he might as well
play it for all it is worth. As in the case of our denial
of his wishes, so it is in our granting of his prayer for
a hand-out,--if he gets it not, he isn't mad at us, and
if he does get it, he isn't too glad for anything we had to
do with it, since in either case, we were merely instruments
of a greater power which is probably a little beyond his
interest to contemplate. I don't know of many charitable
~~xxxxxx~~ persons who would practise charity if they failed
to receive peans of praise and gratitude for their alms-giv-
ing. I think they might benefit from a contact with
colored charity in this locality where their own ego would
be substantially reduced from any tendency toward inflation.

891

Sunday, ~~xxxx~~ Sept. 14th, 1941 - page 5.

This seemed to be a new view-point for Charles. He seemed to like to contemplate it, and he turned it over and over in his mind, laughing the while, and saying that he thought it would act much as balast for him henceforth. It probably wont help him much, but if ~~it~~ it will help him bridge some of his dep essions on encountering exhibitions of what he has been pleased to dub "in-gratitude", then the talk will not have been entirely idle.

About 4 I started back toward home, dropping off for a little rest at Archillius's house, and so along the lane through miles of Melrose pecane orchards and on through the hay fields passed the lonely barn, which will always be more lonely after this morning's meeting in the road.

Back home about six o'clock, I chatted for a few moments with Aunt Cammie and then retired to the house for a hot bath and shave and a quite nap. But Elam came to see me and after he had departed, Peter came by, and so I didn't nap but rather talked while I bathed and shaved, catching up on Melrose doings since Saturday night.

At the big house I sat with Aunt Cammie until nearly eight. I asked her if Henry had dropped by before Stephen left for the Wars. She didn't even know Henry had been at Melrose this week-end. I thought of what I had told Charles about people being an instrumentx of Fortune, and nothing in themselves.

I spoke with Pat a few moments. He said didnner had been full of fun, his Daddy had been so gay. Joe so often is. He said Dan and Joe had started in on the Jews and had poured it on good, and that Sister's husband had left the t ble at that point to go see if the baby was alright, although it already had two nurses. Poor Dr. Wenk.

And so the day worn out, and after saying good night I raided the ice box for roast beef and chicken and potatoe salade and milk, and thence home and to bed.

892

Monday, Sept. 15th, 1941.

The sky continues over-cast without rain.

With General Stephen off for the Wars in and about the bayous from here to Shreveport, and the rest of the forces on the march, the clatter and bang of the War Games spread about the country side all day.

When I took my mail to the store about 8:30, there were battallions of tanks moving along the road and over head groups of planes in formations of threes, spread far away to the east and west. The had erected a machine-gun nest at the forks of the road where the road to Bermuda branches off the lane toward Montrose and already soldiers in groups of four were stationed at either end of Cane River bridge.

I watched the doings for half and hour or more and then took the in-coming mail to the big house with a view of running through it with Aunt Cammie. But we chatted for an hour and a half first, Stephen's wife and Celeste having joined the Madam for coffee.

The mail wasn't excessive but interesting none the less. There was an Atlanta letter from Nellie Walles Brandon saying she was returing to Natchez before the 1st of October, and Ed. Mazurette from Denver sent four sections of the Adams County map of Plantations which he is enlarging for us. It was beautifully done.

In the evening we went to Cloutierville to supper, Celeste, the Madam, Stephen's wife and young Stephen, Pat and I.

On our way down we passed lots of soldiers. some stationed at the Spillway and some further along the river road. It was raining when we returned about eight, and the soldiers were still gurading the road. After I said goodnight at the big house I walked down to the saloon. Soldiers were still guarding the bridge, and one of them was telling some darkies that Roosevelt's neck ought to be broke by somebody and then we wouldn't be having all this war talk. The darkies seemed awed and puzzled.

I returned home a little after nine and so to sleep.

893

Tuesday, Sept. 16th, 1941.

A fine day, and the first real suggestion of Autumn, - vaguely cool atmosphere blending perfectly with the ample warmth of the sun.

At seven I went to the store with the outgoing mail, and wrote with Eugene across the River where he took Fat Mat and Log with disks and whatnot to repair some sort of a harrow in the field. Log said they could put the disk on alright but it wouldn't do much good without the needed washer between the disk itself and the rod to which it was to be attached. Nobody seemed to care much about the washer.

Back to Melrose, J. H. and I started for town. On the River Road, almost ~~to~~ to Bermuda, we were hailed by soldiers in a truck. On stopping we were told that they didn't like dust, -- their truck being parked along side the road. I had realized they were allergic to war, but I hadn't thought about their re-action to dust before.

In town we found the streets jammed with trucks and tanks, but mostly the former, filled with soldiers being moved up to the battle line. It was after ten before we got back to Melrose through long lines of military lorries.

General Stephen Henry returned from his observations since Sunday during which time he had been concentrating primarily on the operations of the tanks, -- that branch of the Army for which he has been responsible. Again he spoke of low morale in the ranks. He was tired, having been on the go for the last 48 hours, but in spite of his fatigue was as courteous as ever. He brought a Colonel Lawrence over to Lyle's to see the house. Col. Lawrence's aid was with them. The youth was not presented.

After supper I retired early, about 6:55, I think.

894

Wednesday, Sept. 17th, 1941.

Anothe beautiful day.

I couldn't sleep after 4 A.M. and so thundered away on my typewriter until Frank arrived.

A little after seven, Pat came over to say that Stephen and his family were leaving for Baton Rouge, and wanted to come over to say goodbye, but that Grandmother had told them I would be glad to slip over to the big house to save them the time which they needed to get away early for Baton Rouge. I met them on the front gallery, and we made our au revours. They certainly are likeable people.

Aunt Cammie and I got out a flock of mail in the morning, and afterward I did some work at home until Peter came by. We chatted for a little while, and after he had gone, Sam Brown came by. Sam returned yesterday from a week or so's work in Alexandria. He said he received \$10.00 a week working in a cafe there, but didn't like it. He said he had seen Buddy Red on Monday, and Buddy said he wasn't come home until Christmas. As he is washing dishes in a cafe, I'm afraid his job may fold up under him when the soldiers pull out on October 1st, but if he likes it in Alexandria, possibly he may find some other job, although according to Sam, jobs are going to be scarce, as people from all over the South, - and as far ~~xx~~ West as Arizona are converging on that place. Sam said he had seen Levee and Joe, and that neither of them had jobs. Puny is working on a "button" job. "Button" jobs are those at the camps several miles outside Alexandria, - pushing wheelbarrows, moving lumber and such things. They are called "button" jobs because of the large button, bearing the worker's number which are given him when he is employed and which must be worn during his hours of employment. It seems Joe had a "button" job but found it too hard. He is now looking for a cafe job. Puny, being rather sickly, is not likely to last long on his "button". It seems he has had several, but usually burns out within a day or two.

From Sam and from others, I hear that Henry is making a dollar an hour. He plans to return to Melrose this week-end to take the furniture which he has here back to Alexandria with him. He is living with Aunt Rose's daughter and their 2 children. He says he is going to take his Cane River wife, Berta Brown, and her baby with him. The whole thing shouds about as stupid as one might expect.

895

Wednesday, Sept 17th, 1941 - page 2.

This afternoon I labored on my hedge, after having coffee with Aunt Cammie at 2:30. About 3 o'clock there was a fairly consistent cannonade from the direction of the square in front of the store and in the cotton fields beyond the row of banana trees at the back of the White Gardens. It seems the Reds and the Blues had established contact, and were fighting the famous Battle of Melrose. Either the Red captured the Blues or the other way around, and groups of prisoners were ~~xxxx~~ herded in Celeste's front yard. There were lines of tanks and lorries all up and down the road as far as one could see, and victors and vanquished decided to camp on the battle fields last ~~xxxx~~ for the night. It was dark before 7:30 and by eight o'clock soldiers were beginning to search for places to lie down, - along the roadway, on the store gallery, in the front yard, in the cotton gin, the barns and all over the place.

Mattie was so scared she wanted to get done with her supper work as soon as she could to scoot home, and everyone flew from wherever the soldiers found them to barricade themselves in their cabins. All the soldiers seem indifferent or resentful of having to be soldiers, and I reckon the War Games aren't tending to build up morale much, even though their physical improvement may show some trend in the right direction. I wanted to take a walk, but of course that was out of the question, what with all the tanks and trucks to bump into and all the milling troupes to overcome, and so at eight I folded up.

896

Thursday, Sept. 17th, 1941.

The day rose cool and clear on this second 24 hour period of the Battle of Melrose.

I awoke at 4 but didn't arise until after five o'clock. Already the tanks and lorries were back-firing on the junction of the Montrose - Bermuda roads, and Celeste's turkey, cooped up in the fattening pen behind the screen of trees protested automatically as the armed force went into action.

By dawn it was evident that it was the Blues who were in complete possession of Melrose, and all of the Reds who hadn't escaped, were still huddled as prisoners of war in Celeste's front yard.

Frank in bringing me coffee, had confided that he had hidden two Red spies in the barn where they could spend the night in security.

Shortly after dinner, Aunt Cammie met them for the first time, as she was making a round of the garden at Dr. Miller's cabin. They were nice boys,--a Mr. Sanders from St. Louis, Mo., and another youth from Minneapolis.

They asked if they might use the telephone to report to General Headquarters. Aunt Cammie seconded the motion, and when they were finished, the Commandant asked to speak with her on the wire to thank her for her help. Within a few minutes, a Red airplane came out of the West, circled low over Melrose, and wigwagged that their message reporting Blue troop movements had been duly received.

At supper time, the boys, who preferred to remain out of sight, lounged in the shade of the giant bamboo hedge, and to them Aunt Cammie sent a well stocked tray of home cooked things to delight a campaigner's heart, - or make him homesick.

Thinking that the boys would enjoy a shower and the comforts of a bed after days without the sight of one, she offered them Dr. Miller's cabin, stipulating only that they use no lights in the house, since she didn't care to have anyone else on Melrose know that she was adding and abetting them. .

897

Thursday, Sept. 17th, 1941 - page 2.

Aunt Cammie and I read until after eight, and after I had gone home the spies tapped on my back gallery. They wanted to talk, and I was enchanted to provide a listener.

Mr. Sanders spoke of his interest in flowers,--he had discussed them at length with Aunt Cammie during the afternoon, and told me he had been interested in some such business in Florida and I believe in St. Louis. He asked if I by any chance knew Mr. Peterson of St. Louis,--and ~~we~~ when I told him that Mr. Peterson had been here last summer, making plans of the African House for the Historic Buildings Survey, and that we had had much subsequent correspondence, he seemed delighted to have run across someone who was acquainted with a mutual friend.

The boys remarked upon the oddity of seeing white children,--one such as Pat,--playing with colored children. They said that in St. Louis or Minneapolis if a policeman saw a white child playing with a colored child, they would immediately take the white child home to be severely reprimanded by its parents, as white and colored children could never play together in the north.

It was between 11 and midnight when the spies departed for their comfortable beds at Dr. Miller's. The praphanalia of the Blues was still rumbling up and down the road, although the turkey's voice must have worn out, since his protestations seemed to have died out with the coming of night. The store, which had been doing a sell-out business all day, in candy, canned goods, bake-stuff, etc., kept open late in the evening, but by 12 o'clock I was in bed, and shortly after the Army rumbled on without registering in my mind thus lost in sleep.

898

Friday, Sept. 18th, 1941.

Another perfect day, opening much as yesterday, with the banging of the military, the puffing of the gin and intermittent exploding of protestation from Celeste's old gobbler.

Our spies remained all day, lingering, I think, a moment too long, since their presence was discovered and accordingly the first bloom of Southern hospitality was dusted off what otherwise would have been a perfect flowering of a pleasant interlude in their pseudo-military activities.

Aunt Cammie and I had hoped to do a little work in the morning. Celeste came over before nine for coffee and conversation, remaining until nearly ten. Then a servant ~~problem~~ problem developed, and then Sister blew in, and the servant problem, of course, was intensified, magnified and thus projected throughout the rest of the day to poison the atmosphere for the balance of our waking hours.

Celeste told us of doings at Magnolia Plantation, where it seems, the Hertzogs do a lot by way of feeding and--chatting with the boys of the Army. One of these youths was an army chaplain, and accordingly wore a cross on his uniform. Old Miss Sally was entranced when she saw this emblem, and accordingly made the youth a priest automatically in her own mind, although he explained to her that while he administered to all denominations in the Army, he actually was a Lutheran. But Miss & Sally brushed all this aside, it would appear, asking him if he wouldn't like to see the Chapel, incorporated in Magnolia, and when, in courtesy, he acquiesced, she importuned him to say Mass. He explained to her that while he was acquainted with the ritual, he really was not a priest and could not perform service before her Catholic altar. But Sally couldn't understand that, and ended up by giving people to understand that this poor chap was in reality a wolf in sheep's clothing.

The Battle of Melrose continued to rage until well after three P.M., with planes drooning endlessly overhead and all the impedimenta of warfare rolling up and down the dust choked road. An Armistice was declared for both sides until Sunday at mid-night, and most of the Army moved away about dark, save for several hundred who pitched their tents in the hay-field out by the forelorn haybarn by the bayou.

I worked in my garden today, for working in the garden does much to level mountains, and at eight I retired and slept.

899

Saturday, Sept. 20th, 1941.

Another fine day, and much ozone in the air to suggest the advent of Fall.

When I took the mail to the store, the place was still teaming with soldiers, and motorized units throw clouds of dust choking the store and seeping across the gardens in a constant progression of something which strongly suggested the Dust Bowl in full operation.

With Aunt Cammie at nine I had coffee and together we spoke of spies and kindred subjects, and particularly about Belle Boyd whose fame as a Southern spy in the Civil War continues to excite the imagination after these many years.

With the arrival of the mail we were accordingly jolted when clippings arrived from New York, included in which was a long article from the World Telegram, devoting several columns to Belle Boyd. Of all things.

Our work was interrupted, as we were making a list of Louisiana-Mississippi volumes to order from a Philadelphia dealer. Mrs. Frank Blanchard of Shreveport had come to ask Aunt Cammie for aid in finding a servant-companion to stay with Mrs. Blanchard's mother, Mrs. D. Scarborough, of Natchitoches. While they were chatting in the library, I found Mr. Brew who did some reading for me. This little fellow said he had wanted to come for a day or two back but what with the soldiers all about the place, they had given him too much trash to eat, - candy, cakes, soft drinks, etc., and that as a result, his stomach had been all up-set, and he had been forced to lie down a great deal.

Half an hour later, - her guest departed, - Aunt Cammie and I resumed our work when Frank came in to say that he had spoken with Mr. J. H., and that he was taking off three days. I don't know if he will ever come back or not. It is true that he has been drinking off and on since Lyle's last visit, but things rocked along without a flare until Sister arrived yesterday morning.

Just after dinner, Archilius came by to see me. I wrote a letter to Loney in Alexandria for him. Archilius was depressed. He said his daughter planned to start for Alexandria on Sunday with Henry Hertzog who is coming up to Melrose to get his things this week-end. Archilius' daughter is to live with Henry in the same cabin in which Henry and his other life and 2 children are also living. Archilius thinks it is a shame his daughter acts thus, and he foresees a rumpus ahead for somebody in a household comprising one man, two wives and three children. I could easily understand his point of view.

900

Saturday, Sept. 20th, 1941 - page 2.

In the afternoon, Aunt Cammie and I knocked off the remainder of the list on which we had been working, wrote a letter or two, and covered a lot of subjects in conversation. Among other things, I gathered that business is growing duller in Cloutiersville, a fact which probably accounts for much of the disturbed states of at least two minds, and a contributing factor in the necessity for Frank to take a few days off.

After supper the McCooks came, bringing with them a couple of soldiers from the air port in town, - one Mulcahy of Wilkes-barrie who seemed loquacious but dumb and one Moffat from Baltimore who seemed uninteresting.

After they had made a tour of the place, - the soldiers, - under Pat's guidance, while Aunt Cammie talked in the library with Dr. McCook and I strolled with Madam McCook, they all pulled out, and Aunt Cammie and I read until after eight.

The constant stream of vehicles has trickled out, but they are parked all along the roads, and there are still hundreds of tents in the hay-field, so I saw no point in trying to negotiate the highways for a walk before retiring.

901

Sunday, Sept. 21st, 1941.

Another marvelous day. One or twice in the Spring and in the Fall days like these appear, like a prolonged sigh, regretting a little the passing of the preceding season, and seeming to yearn a little for the one immediately ahead.. Whether in Spring or in Fall, these days seem so identical that if Rip Van Winkle were to awaken from a 20 year's sleep on such a day, he would be almost unable to determine in which season he had come back to consciousness. All the elements seem so perfectly synchronized that even the birds play out their parts for a day, foregoing their songs and busying themselves from morn 'til night with endless twitterings. The breeze is constant and cool, tempered by a brilliant sunshine, and regardless of the direction from which it blows, one has to stop to think it is a harbinger of Winter or Summer. Cincce seems to have beset the horizon, and even the impulse to determine the place on the calendar is deadened by a delicious indifference cascading from the deep blue of Heaven.

I knocked out a dozen letters before nine, and then took coffee with Aunt Cammie. My day had gotten under way when Sam Peace brought me my morning coffee. I missed Frank. For breakfast, Sam brought me my tray, as prepared by Clemence, who is cooking today in Mattie's place. The breakfast was alright, but there was no coffee on board.

While chatting with the Madam, Henry came in. She greeted him with an admonition for not having called when on Cane River last Sunday. I left in the midst of it. Later I learned that he hadn't called then because he wasn't "right", as Henry had explained to the Madam, meaning that he had been drinking, and so out of respect for her, he had restrained his impulse to see her and Stephen. Up until 2 o'clock when I saw him he was sober enough. But is is so easy to be convinced when one wants to believe.

After being absent from Melrose for 3 weeks, he plans to remain 2 more weeks in Alexandria. His house has been kept by his concubine, but as he now takes her to Alexandria to live with him for the remaining two weeks, he is moving his furniture out of his Cane River cabin, fearing it might be stolen during his absence. Puny, Sam Davis and others have lost nothing from their cabins, but this case, of course, is different. He told the Madam that Frank's daughter had left home to go to Alexandria because Frank made life so miserable for the family at home, chasing them out in the cotton patch at night, etc. Well, at least, Frank never maintained more than one wife and family under his roof at one time.

902

Sunday, Sept. 21st, 1941 - page 2.

I spent the entire day at home. Peter came to call on me, and Bluff passed by for a little while, and from them I learned much that was going on up and down the river. It seems most of the soldiers from the hay field have pulled out toward Natchitoches. But there has been a little bit of coming and going at the store, primarily by Cane River darkies who had gone to Alexandria to make their fortunes and are now wanting to come back,--the harvest season being over, both in Alexandria and at Melrose.

After the usual Sunday hubbub had died out and Melrose was settling down to peace and quiet, Aunt Cammie and I read for a while. J. H. came in to say good night. He said that he and Celeste had gone to Natchitoches with a view of seeing a movie, but that it was impossible for civilians to get in to any theatre, as lines of soldiers were waiting outside the box offices in every amusement spot. Paynie had said that Saturday night it had been impossible for him to get any fresh meat in town, as it had all been taken up by restaurants who are doing a thriving business. Many of the people in town are also entertaining them, and it seems most of them are fine chaps. I don't recall if I mentioned in my yesterday's Journal what Mrs. McCook had told me regarding a soldier who had called at their house at 6 o'clock on Saturday morning. Dr. McCook, in response to the visit, asked his wife to get up and make toast and coffee for the youth in uniform. While awaiting breakfast, the soldier had gone to the bath room. An hour later, after the soldier had breakfasted, Dr. McCook discovered that his guest had stolen the Dr.'s watch which he had left in the bathroom that morning. And so one black sheep can cast a shadow over the entire flock in average estimation.

J. H. told us that Puny and others who had left Melrose for Alexandria had come back to see him that morning asking to have their cabins back again, now that things will be folding up in Alexandria about the end of this week, on the departure of the participants in the war games. He said he told them that they might have their cabins back again but that he would be unable to give them any work to speak of between now and Spring, and that those who had remained at Melrose would be given priority whenever work was available. Returning to Melrose with nothing in their pockets, and miles from any place to work, I can't imagine how these people are going to survive, unless the chicken roasts are well stocked for nocturnal depredations between now at the time of their arrival.

At eight, I retired, puzzled, regretful and depressed.

903

Monday, Sept. 22nd, 1941.

Another fine day, and so far as I know, there were no Pilgrims.

I sent out a fairly heavy mail, - some 15 or 20 pieces, I suppose, and afterward, at nine o'clock, took coffee with the Madam, in anticipation of doing some work on the typewriter with her.

But before coffee was done, Pat, who had been for a canter with Celeste, came in to ask if the Madam wanted to go over to see Madame Aubin-Rocque with Celeste. She did, and so I folded up my typewriter and undertook some things on the keyboard by myself.

Aunt Cammie took Sam Brown with her, and while at Madame Aubin's, Sam dug a sack full of daffodills.

They returned a little before eleven, and we ran through the mail, a card from Edith Wyatt Moore, telling of her expectation to have her tonsils out today, a splendid letter from Manhattan, a 75 sheet map of the Mississippi from the Miss. River Com., etc. I couldn't complain about today's mail.

After dinner I had expected to work with Aunt Cammie, but obviously the doings of the past couple of days has tired her out, and so I planted about a bushel of the daffodill bulbs in my little garden, and I shall plant about a bushel more within the next few days. I always have found yellow to be my favorite color. I ought to have plenty of it when these bulbs get to doing business.

For some reason, we had dinner at five o'clock,-- the supper bell catching me in the bath tub. Afterwards, we read for an hour or so. I think we were both tired, and I have a feeling that Saturday's racket is still making itself felt. I retired early, - about 7:30, and listened for a while to the radio. Storms are raging on the Gulf and on the Atlantic seaboard. Seasonal storms, I reckon, but outwardly things here seem at peace, for not a soldier was seen on the place today, and the tanks and trucks have all gone out of sight, and the only thing Celeste's old turkey has to complain about is the plantation bell.

904

Tuesday, Sept. 23rd, 1941.

Melrose seems inordinately quiet. No denuding armies are skirmishing about the place, not even a soldier of either side is in sight. The gin isn't in operation, and even Celeste's old gobbler seems to have left off gobbling.

When I went to the store with my mail, I learned that J. H. and Celeste had already left for New Orleans. The open space before the store and garage seemed woefully barren after all the hubbub of last week. Not a human being disturbed the heavy flooring of dust covering the square. The price from a hundred pounds of cotton for each picker has been jumped from 75 cents to a dollar, and I reckon all the darkies are chasing up and down the rows in consequence.

Mrs. Regard came over for dinner. She spoke at length of military flavors in the Catholic services in Natchitoches on Sunday,--soldiers who sang Ave Maria so beautifully, first rate musicians in the organ loft, attired in kaki, and various friends who had opened their homes to the boys for dinner and supper on Sunday. She said they were all lovely boys. She thought that those who had stolen all the watches from the local jeweler and French sardines from the grocer were merely the 56 hundreds of one per cent which every group must always include on a general law of averages.

Pat contributed to the conversation by remarking that J. H. had gone to New Orleans to borrow money to purchase various pieces of farm property which Cane River mulattoes, thanks to the failure of cotton, must put up for sale this fall. Felix Mettayer and Milton Mettayer are two of these, for their little holdings have long been so heavily mortgaged that hanging on to the same in flush times has been something of a triumph on their part. Thanks to this year's cotton worm, the property jig is up.

I suppose Felix is in his 40's and Milton in his 50's. Both are heading for Houston, Texas with their families to begin life over again. It is depressing to picture their immediate future, and it makes me gllomy to guess how much they are going to long for Cane River, even though they do have lots of friends and relatives in the Lone Star State.

J. H. says that according to the Government, the operation of these small tracts can not be performed economically. The advancement made by mechanized farm implements have made it possible for tractors and the hundred and one other improvements to accomplish with so

Tuesday, Sept. 23rd, 1941 - page 2.

905

much less labor that once one is able to invest in the capitol outlay, the big planter is bound to back the little fellow to the wall. One thing for J. H. I must say, I believe he does this more painlessly than people like Sam Lacaze, the Friedmans and the Kohens. Never the less it is deressing to see the heirs of old Grapere Augustin Mettoyer who once owned all this Cane River Property, being sheared of the meager plots of ground to which they have clung so long.

After dinner I set out a few hundred daffodill bulbs, and afterward tried to work a little on B. L. C. Wailes' Immaugral Address before the Miss. Hist. Society, but those people from Cloutierville came in, left their child, and afte that dictating was difficult for the Madam.

After supper the child wanted to have its own way and a certain amount of attention while Aunt Cammie tried to read. About 7 o'clock the child's parents telephoned and Aunt Cammie suggested that they come k and get their off-spring, explaining that it wasn't fair to the child to take him out of his normal routine and accustomed surroundings, save in the case of sickness in the family or some other unavoidable circumstance.

I retired at eight.

906

It was Sunday, Sept. 24th, 1941. The tinkling of the bell on my front gate proclaimed that Sam Peace was still serving coffee at dawning and that Frank had not as yet returned.

Even though Sam once did serve a man gumbo and then murder him, he is adocile person and quite dumb, the way an Indian is dumb, for Sam ha much Indian in his mudato or colored blood. One vast difference between Sam Peace and Frank Moran is not in mental attainments but rather in the fact that Frank when sober,--which is too infrequent these days,-- sense and anticipates what Sam would have to be told.

Well, anyway, Sam arriged with coffee, and half an hour went by before I ot up, it was so miserable outside, and yet so entertaining to lie in bed and watch the rain sweep across the white garden and the gale deckle all the great leaves of the banana trees as they waved wildly against the background ofswaying became trees.

Obviusly the tropical storm which has been ravaging the Coast has struck inland and we ring itself out on us. K I am certainly sorry for the miserable soldiers who were supposed to re-convene their little war at midnight.

Aunt Cammie and I worked a little after nine o'clock, after I had moved things around in my garden with the help of Peter,-- the simulated marble monument, etc. The mail brought a disappointment in that k Robina advised us that she would be unable to get down tomorrow to sepdn the week-end, as she had hoped. It seems that busin ss is suddenly brisk in adnticipation of a turn over of various types of things before the 3 billion dollar tax bill goes into effect on Oct. 1st. - or is it 6 billion dol ars.

Mrs. Regard came for dinner again and afterward Aunt Cammie an I worked until after three when she thought she would take a siesta. I worked in my garden, now that the rain had let up, and at five o'clock, leaped into a hot bath. But no sooner in than my gate bell sounded. It was the McCooks again, after having been here on Saturday night. I leaped back out of the bath, dresse a hurriedly and k listened to them talk until the supper bell sounded when they decided they would remain for supper.-- Surprise. They remained until dark, and afterward we tried to read for a little, but Aunt Cammie was quite tired.

On reaching home, I started to undress when a familiar voice sounded on the gallery outside.

907

Wednesday, Sept. 24th, 1941. - age 2.

It was an old friend who was calling, whom I hadn't seen in ever so long,-- at least 4 or 5 days.

There was news from Alexandria. Buddy Red is reported to be looing well. V.V. Mody or Moody, who is now in Natchitoches jail for the gigging of the trout last summer, has a his wife and 2 children in Alexandria, where he had been working when Mr. Black from this Parish went and got the husband. The wife hasn't any visible means of support, and her brother, Willie Collins, is still suffering from the infected eye, and isn't working, although he left Melrose in hopes of obtaining something down there. She asked my friend if he thought her husband would be in jail long. Poor things, they probably neither read nor x write and are as much in the dark about the future of V.V. as we might be were one of our relatives had been suddenly whisked away to Mars. The children were hungry, my friend reported, and he gave them something to go to the store to by themselves a cake. How typical of the Cane River darkies,--with money enough to buy a loaf of bread, they spend it for a tiny little cake. Possibly that is one reason why we love them.

Levee, he told me, hasn't done any work since he went down to Alexandria, - was it two Sundays ago. Buddy Red and some of the others toss him a hand out now and then.

Puny hadn't had a job either, but his wife was working in the laundry, getting 3.50 a week. Loney is washing dishes in Hotel Bentley.

May has gained 7 pounds since she began working there and her "boss-man" is very pleased with her work, and he says that while everyone in the day labor class will be out of a job within a week or ten days when the soldiers have departed May will still have her job, and so will Tony.

I was depressed with much that I heard, for it was said that most of the people in Alexandria were starving to death,-- that is the colored people. One cannot find a place to live easily. It is my understanding that a person of color may find a house or rather a room for \$3.50 a week, but few of them can afford to pay that, and they have to stint on food accordingly.

I heard several of the details over two or three times, and I was depressed at the repetition, since it indicated a release from reality in the consequence of good cheer. Tomorrow was set for the day to make a round at the big house, but I realized the physical condition by that time would preclude that. And so we said good night, and I retired, but I reckon my friend, disappearing in the dark, was praying that the lights of the saloon at the far end of the bridge might still be gleaming.

908

Thursday, Sept. 24th (?), 1941.

Yesterday's cyclonic storm must have come back again sometime between 8 P. M. and midnight, and this morning the rain was coming down at 45 degree angles, thanks to a strong wind whipping up from the south west.

J. H. sent me word about 7 that he was leaving for town shortly. I went along, as did Pat. It was a dreary ride with few if any civilian cars on the road but plenty of motorized army vehicles, all headed south. I reckon the war games are beginning to play out.

I hurried back home to have coffee with Aunt Cammie by ten o'clock when I expected an old friend might bring in the mail. The old friend never showed up, but Celeste and Mrs. Regard did and the former told us much of her trip to New Orleans earlier in the week.

They left a little after eleven, and Aunt Cammie and I ran through the mail. There wasn't much. A letter from Robina spoke of the occupation of Shreveport by the Red Army. She said that many shop windows carried displays of merchandise embracing red as the basic color and that many of the civilians wore red ribbons or arm bands or anything indicating their enthusiasm for the side which was occupying their city.

There was no opportunity to do any thing jointly in the morning and visitors in the afternoon precluded any work together. The storm broke up around noon and by three o'clock the

sun was bright and all though the ground was soaked, I managed to do a little gardening.

Pat went to the movies after supper with some of his colored boys, and Aunt Cammie and I read until eight, after which I went to bed, inspite of the nice moon which beckoned me toward the big road, but I realized that the vast mud puddles enlarged by the gouging by recent army paraphernalia would make traveling a-foot difficult toward the bridge, and so I did a bit of radio listening instead. There were several broadcasts from Washington, detailing particulars regarding today's visit of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. As Mrs. Roosevelt's brother had died this morning at 5 o'clock, the scheduled White House luncheon was cancelled and the President received the Windsors in his office. British and American officials seem rather cagey about lending too much official element into the current picture, fearing the popularity of the Duke and Duchess might over-shadow the popularity of the reigning house in Britain, but according to the broadcasters, the Windsor excited unique enthusiasm on the part of the Washington populace, for I suppose the world will always feel drawn to them like one feels drawn to the chief actors in a great play. And when a king rebels for romance, that will always appeal to the imagination even after all the more

909

Friday, Sept 25th, (?), 1941.

Another fine day, pleasantly warm in the sun with just a little breeze to temper a tendency toward too much warmth.

But during last night, it cooled off considerably, and after Sam Peace had come at 6 o'clock and gone at 6:20, I jumped out of bed, deciding that I ought to lay the gayest and earliest fire of the season. By the time Sam Brown came with breakfast, the blaze was going along merrily and Sam laughed in glee at the opportunity to warm his hands by it.

We didn't do much work today. - Aunt Cammie and I, what with a round of interruptions. I thought there might be one more than there was, but again the morning passed an one familiar light chocolate face I had expected did not appear.

In the afternoon we did a round of transcriptions on various notes concerning Jefferson College, and afterwards I started to walk to the bridge, but the vast mud holes, scooped out by the Army's motorized camions, prevented more than a start.

About three o'clock the trucks began rolling up the river road from the South. There was a steady stream, and by 4 o'clock the dust was sifting across the gardens.

About supper time, someone reported that there were several miles of infantry heading up from Magnolia, some 10 miles away. About 6:30 or 7, by the time it was fairly dark, we heard their voices, passing along in front of the house, - groups of about 60, singing and shouting, followed by a space of some yards, and then further groups, singing in the night, and so on.

We kept on reading, save for a brief visit to the front gallery, from whence we couldn't see them, thanks to the great oak, and shrubs between the house and the road, but their voices were audible enough.

We continued our reading, --first from a conservation magazine, issued by the State, primarily from an article about Jane (?) Portescue Andrews, who wrote In The Gloaming, under the name of Portescue, although her music always bore the name of Portescue. She at 18 had had a love affair in Marion, Union Parish, North Louisiana, but her mother had quashed it, and as a result, after the girl and her mother had departed from the place, the young lady wrote the song so long popular. From that we went on to read an old volume, published in 1865, - Camp Fires and Cotton Fields, which seemed to contain quite a bit of interesting data concerning the South during the war. . At eight I said goodnight. Trucks were still rolling up the river road and the sound of marching men floated in through the moonlit garden. I had thought of taking a walk, but the kind I like wouldn't harmonize so well with the rattle and bang of motorized units of the U. S. Armies.

910

Saturday, Sept 26th or 27th, (?), 1941.

It was cool last night, and by four o'clock, I concluded I would do well to make my hearth blaze a second time this fall season. It felt good.

The early morning broadcasts asked motorists to avoid using any road, except in emergency, between the Red and Sabine Rivers south from Shreveport. This is the area in which Melrose is located, --some 90 or 100 miles south of Shreveport.

All night the rumble of traffic had gone on, and while some of the soldiers had slept along the roadways, the trucks never ceased tearing up the road in a general northerly direction.

With the first streaks of the dawn, those who were sleeping began giffing themselves for another day. Off in the direction of the gin, there was an intermittent series of shouting and laughter from the soldiery. Celeste's old turkey must have objected, for he took up his protestations again, and shortly some of the soldiers began mocking him. Their mimicry was good, and the turkey must have thought so too, for a torrent of gobbles, evidently much to the delight of the soldiers, poured forth from the old fellows throat. This went on indefinitely.

When Sam Peace brought me my coffee about 6, he told me of a truck which had gone over the bank down by the spillway and had landed bottom side up. He said he thought none of the soldiers had been hurt. According to other reports, it is the Blue Army which is transporting battalions from Camp Livingston and other encampments around Alexandria, some 45 miles to the South, moving them up to the Shreveport area. The trucks have been going in a steam stream all day, with loaded vehicles moving northward at high speed, and a similar stream of empty trucks moving South after having discharged their human cargo. The dust is terrific.

Aunt Cammie and I worked in the morning and I afterward, Mat worked some in the secret garden for me, and Sam Brown and Elam came to watch gold fish and waste time until noon. In the afternoon Peter came for a while, and after Aunt Cammie and I had gone through another round, I labored by myself on my machine until nearly five. Going to the store about that time, I found lots of darkies there, watching the unending parade sweeping by. Mary Sauerwell, the former cook, asked me for a donation for St. Mathews, which she says, needs some repairs on its belfry. She didn't add that her own pocketbook also needs refurbishing, nor that she was leaving for Alexandria tomorrow, although that word had come through before I saw her. There were others on the store gallery who needed money too for one reason or another. In each instance, save Mary's, they wanted to "borrow" money until next Saturday. With work falling off for the season, I am amused at their desire to "borrow."

911

Saturday, Sept. 26 or 27th, 1941 - page 2.

After supper, which was early, Aunt Cammie did a bit of weaving while I puttered around in my garden, and afterward we resumed our reading from the two books we had explored last night.

Mrs. Regard came over to spend the night, as her daughter and J. H. were planning to go to a dance for the air corps in town, and Celeste's mother didn't want to stay alone.

At eight we said goodnight, and thanks to the pleasant moon, I took to the big road. The constant stream of trucks continued endlessly, driving very fast, and without lights. I had some difficulty in breaking across the road. The trucks continued on this side of the river up the Bermuda road, leaving the road to the bridge over Cane River deserted. This road I took, and enjoyed the measure of quiet which it afforded.

I encountered Emanuel - Clemence's husband, and old Uncle Lewis in the road. We talked nonsense for twenty minutes.

I crossed the river then, and stopped by the saloon for a moment. Save for one or two darkies, it was deserted,--N'er a soldier and very few customers. I have never seen fewer people there on a Saturday night. Obviously it was no night for most of the darkies to trek towards "the poor man's club" what with all the traffice most of them would have to encounter before reaching the quiet of the bridge road. I chatted for a moment with one or two old friends, and then returned slowly home, and so to bed.

912

Sunday, Sept. 28th, 1941.

A beautiful day, all sunshine and vagrant breezes.

I had lots of visitors, - beginning at 5:45, when instead of Sam Peace appearing with coffee, Frank came up almost like Botticelli's Birth of Venus, with all the quiet of a moving figure on canvas and withal as pleasant to the unique calm of early dawn. Sam Peace and Frank some how are illustrative of the world of difference in approach as two servants could be. When Sam Peace brings coffee in the morning, the gardens of Melrose are a little shaken by the clatter of the bell on my garden gate, and I am gently jolted from half consciousness into reality. Frank on the other hand, passes through the gate almost as seldom passes through a grove of trees, - one moment being on one side and the next on the other, with no sound recording the passing. Both servants evidence a desire to please, one not sensing how to accomplish it and the other accomplishing it without realizing how. I like a cigarette with my first cup of coffee. After Sam Peace pours, he waits for me to take a cigarette from the console and I must always ask him if he can find a match. Frank, on the other hand, after pouring automatically offers me a cigarette, and no sooner have I taken it than a match is burning merrily to get the day under way. I reckon these are ridiculous little matters to mention, and yet it is these little flares along the way which illustrate so minutely but so conclusively that aptitude of one personality for adjusting itself to people and customs and the complete inability, in spite of a desire to do so, on the part of another. Perhaps it is Sam Peace's Indian blood which tends to isolate him from the human feelings of others while Frank's mixture of white and colored blood,--and probably the presence of the colored blood, makes it inevitable for him to smooth over the quirks of human surfaces by pouring out just the proper amount of instinctive understanding to sense the smoothness of the surface and what it is required to fill up the indentations.

Peter came to see me while I was at the big house having coffee with Aunt Cammie and after I returned home, Elam came by staying until dinner time. After dinner, Elam came back and staid all afternoon. Frank came with coffee at 3 o'clock, and Bluff came by at 3:30, - all of them full of stories about the doings of the soldiers encamped about Melrose, and all of them seeming to like the contacts with the uniformed men.

Aunt Cammie and I read after supper until 7:30 when we said good night. Thanks to a waxing moon, I decided to take a turn as far as the River and back. Soldiers were stationed in front of the store and the garages as I passed

913

Sunday, Sept. 29th, 1941 - page 2.

and there was a little camp fire blazing at the far end of Cane River bridge as I passed, - with 2 soldiers and 2 darkies sitting about it chatting and laughing.

When I returned about 8:30, the soldiers in front of the garage and the store had departed, and for the first time in a couple of weeks an intense quiet hovered over Melrose.

I retired about ten o'clock, and in turning on the radio for the news, I learned that an Armistice between the contending Red and Blue Armies had been signed at 5:45, and that the War Games for this season were over. The news must have come to the Melrose soldiers between the time I started for my walk and my return. I cut off the radio and went to sleep. There was no sound of trucks and tanks during the night.

914

Monday, Sept. 29th, 1941.

Warmer weather has returned. The extra quilt of last week is now extraneous.

It was good to awaken to find Frank at my bedside at 5 A.M.

After getting out quite a batch of mail, I went to the big house to work with Aunt Cammie.

We concentrated on sorting out old Documents, placing them in Chronological order. These are Natchitoches Parish records, dating from the early 1700's down through the 1860's.

A number of years ago these papers along with vast quantities of others were strewn about on the upper floor of the Parish Court House. One day Dewey Sondoll, the Norwegian architect chanced to be in the Court House and stumbled over them. He asked an attendant if they were of any interest to the Parish and if they were to be left scattered about the floor. The attendant told Sondoll he could have all he wanted. Sondoll accordingly gathered up as big an armful as he could stagger under. He took them home with him to Shreveport. Later, - some years, I believe, he told Aunt Cammie he had no use for them and asked her if she could use them. She said she could, even though the greater part of them were in French which she doesn't read, for she felt that she might have them translated later. This did occur, - I believe Lyle had many of them translated by W.F. A. Workers. The originals and the translations were returned to Aunt Cammie and it was these we checked over.

In the late after noon, Pany's wife's boy, Henry Earl Solomon, black as the ace of spades, came by to ask if he could help me in my garden. He could. About 14, he seems to be quite intelligent, and with a "green hand", at least this initial try at gardening seemed to indicate that he had unusual sense in then handling of bulbs, and what not. And so I spent the balance of the day putting in new borders about the terrace and removing spaces of Giant's Beard from the top of the terrace for an emplacement for a new flight of brick steps.

We read for a while after supper, - Aunt Cammie and I, and at 8 I retired.

915

Tuesday, Sept. 30th, 1941.

It rained heavily last night but the sky was clear this morning and the humidity inordinately high.

Aunt Cammie and I continued our labors on the old Natchitoches records. I think I may have forgotten to say in my Journal of yesterday, regarding Sendell's armful of these old papers that shortly after he had gathered these up, the ones left behind were consumed in a fire which a few weeks later swept the upper floor of the Court House, destroying this remarkable collection, a loss which in no way seemed to disturb the Parish officials or citizens, since no value was ever set on this "old trash".

The major portion of these Sendell saved were for the years 1813, 1817, 1841 and 1847, although there are a great number of other years, spread between 1720 and 1865 represented in this original collection.

After the first group had been translated, Aunt Cammie & I divided the translations into two groups at random and had them bound, not having the opportunity to arrange them either in regard to subject matter, dates or individuals represented in these documents. Without an index, it is almost impossible to find anything in the 2 volumes thus bound, and we have decided that after we have arranged the third group, as yet unbound, in chronological order, together with an index as to subject matter, detailed opposite each year, we shall remove the first two volumes from their bindings, arrange them chronologically and index them, also, in order that future students of early Natchitoches records may find the subject matter more accessible.

Rain discouraged gardening in the afternoon, and after supper it continued to pour. We read until 8 from The Cradle Days of St. Mary's of Natchez, being enormously impressed by glaring errors which appeared in the latter part of the book. For instance, Stephen Minor, hailing from a long stock of Pennsylvanians, is put down as the son of Governor Gayoso of Natchez, although Minor had no blood relation with Gayoso whatsoever. And the Bishop states that Bernard Lintet's daughter who actually was the wife of Stephen Minor, was married to James Surget, and why the good Bishop should have selected a Surget for a husband of Stephen Minor's wife, I have no idea.

916

Wednesday, Oct. 1st, 1941.

This is what might be known as a wasted day, for I did practically nothing.

After getting out a little mail just after breakfast, J. H. sent me a message that he was going to town.

It was a little after seven when I arrived with my mail, and J. H. was on the front gallery, but it seemed that something had developed that would require him to stay at Melrose this morning, and so he was sending the car to town to get some part needed for the hay press. I decided I would go along regardless, and so I joined Leon, - not wit out some misgivings, and headed toward Natchitoches. When in town, Leon told me that he would be ready to return about 9:30 and said he would meet me on the corner where he stands the statue of the old darkie tipping his hat.

I did a little shopping, and stationed myself at the corner at nine. I was still stationed there at 12, when I telephoned Melrose to inquire if anything had been heard from Leon. Something had. Leon had been back on the plantation since 10:30 or 11. J. H. said he would send a car up for me right away, but I declined, thinking that I might catch the 1:30 bus down. But I gified without the Army, for although manoeuvres are over, thousands of soldiers are still about, and as I stood on another corner waiting for the bus - or possibly a ride, about 500 trucks passed by, - I stopped counting after the 485th had passed, for by then it was nearly three o'clock and the 1:30 bus hadn't appeared as yet.

And so I walked for a ways, although against my better judgement, as I had just had my ankle dressed and my shoe rubbing against it may it sore and hot. But I caught a little ride, - with a preacher. No other cars would stop for two reasons, - first because the endless line of moving army vehicles discouraged moving civilian traffic from halting, and secondly, because at 12 o'clock the first game of the 1941 World Series baseball game between the New York Yankees and the Brooklyn Dodgers had started, and men in cars who might have stopped were too concentrated on what was issuing from the car radio to want to hazard picking up someone who might spoil their entertainment.

And thus, after walking and riding, I reached home about 4, - tired and hungry and mad. Betty Regard was visiting the Madam, and I chatted with them both for a moment, after which I bathed, in a longish hot bath, lay down for a few moments, catted with a couple of colored callers, and that was the day. We read a little after supper, and thence I folded up about 11:30

917

Thursday, Oct. 2nd, 1941.

Another fine day, but still too hot for October.

There was some good mail this morning, nice from Manhattan and nice from Shreveport, with a promise from Robina that she might get down this coming week end, - I mean next week end. It seems her business is going by leaps and bounds, what with some much work having come to hand during the last few days of September, thanks to people who wanted to pay bills for one thing or another on accounts Robina handles, since payment before October first on subscriptions to Little Theatre, etc., avoids paying the increased Federal War Tax which went into effect yesterday, with a view of raising six billion dollars this year.

There was also a nice letter from Edith Wyatt Moore, the first she has written since her tonsils were removed last Sunday. She says she finds her present condition somewhat untenable, since her throat is such that she cannot talk.

There was also a nice letter for William McCain, President of the Mississippi Historical Society, saying he would like to use the speech of B. L. C. Waller, as prepared for the first Meeting of the Miss. Hist. Society in 1860. In his letter, Mr. McCain remarked upon the difficulty of saving historic documents, when contending with the family of a deceased person of importance. Since the death of Senator Pat Harrison of Miss., - long Senate Chairman of the Finance Committee, Mr. McCain said he had been negotiating with Mrs. Harrison for her husband's official papers, but that the net result of his efforts had been their destruction by the widow.

In the afternoon, Aunt Cammie took Mattie and went to Cloutierville. I remained at home to garden. Henry Earle helped me lay a brick pavement or walk on the upper North terrace. He worked like a trojan (with a large T), and later helped me with other details. The boy seems exceptionally well trained, and I like him.

After supper Aunt Cammie returned and we read for a little while, and after 8 o'clock I went for a walk as far as the bridge, - the roads were so full of mud puddles and moons, reflected in them, that under foot wasn't very pleasant. But everything was grand from the earth up to Heaven, and I slept well at 10.

918

Friday, Oct. 3rd, 1941.

Continued warm weather with high humidity. The Fall garden is growing madly, with collards and cabbages vying with turnips to see which can climb to maturity fastest.

Aunt Cammie and I did a little work in the morning, but too many interruptions by the servants kept us from doing too much.

It is J. H.'s birthday, and so he and Celeste and Madam Regard came over for dinner. Paynie came down, as he usually does on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. The gumbo was grand and the pork chops were good, - pork for J. H., as it is his favorite meat, while oysters were in abundance, it being Friday and Celeste and he Mother being Catholics.

In the afternoon Aunt Cammie and I tried to do a little work, but we didn't get far, - too much coming and going as in the morning.

At three o'clock Henry Earle and I continued our gardening, and at 4:30 Mrs. Rand came to call, bringing her husband's niece, Marjorie with her, and her son, Horace Rand, of the Air Corps, and a Miss Cox of Tyler, Texas. We had a nice chat until after six o'clock, when Aunt Cammie and I had our supper, - the others having eaten while we were doing a round of the gardens with the Rands.

Mrs. Rand told me of some extraordinary Cape Jasmins she is going to get me from Utah, Alabama, and some old fashioned Jonquills, - white, she says they are, and altogether lovely.

As always, she bought presents, - a big round tin of fancy cookies and a nice earthen jar of some kind of cinnamon juice or something of the sort.

In the evening Aunt Cammie and I read until eight. It was too wet to walk afterwards and so I retired to listen to a little radio, including a speech by Charles Lindbergh, it being a pure isolationist item, with endless innuendoes as the Roosevelt Administration. He was speaking from Fort Wayne, Indiana, and seemed to receive large applause from the audience. He appears to feel it would be a great calamity if the British Empire should win the War. He doesn't say what he thinks it would be like if Hitler should win it, - but I gather he would prefer that. Odd, how smart some people can be in one line and how off-on-the-wrong-foot, as it seems to me, on another.

919

Saturday, Oct 4th, 1941.

Another fine day, with Frank beginning it for me a little after five in a happy frame of mind, for his daughter, Mae, is coming up from Alexandria tonight to spend Sunday with him.

After mail, I sat for a time with Charles Masurette who had driven up from Little River in his buggy. Charles asked me to type a poem he had written for a little boy in Golden Meadow, La., who wants to win some sort of a contest. Charles letter to the boy was sweet. He may not be much of a farmer, but with a guaranteed income, that doesn't matter, and what is more important, it appears his heart is in the right place, even if he can't abide the darkies.

Aunt Camie and I accomplished precisely nothing. Just as we started to work, Paynie came in and sat until it was time for the Madam to nap, - which she never did, and after dinner we tried it again, but the continuous interruptions kept us from getting any where.

At 2:30 Henry Early and I made a round of the gardens, collecting various specimens of iris which we planted on the lower level of the terrace around the north and west sides. He is so apt, that it is a pleasure just to watch him undertake his gardening.

He was entranced with the gold fish in the pool, and with the water hyacinthes which are now in bloom. We accordingly found a fish bowl, went fishing for gold fish and after some success, fitted it up with fish and water hyacinthes, and he went on his way rejoicing.

After supper, Elam came to see me for a little while, and Peter came by too. Saturday nights is show night at Ashleys, and these poor boys don't have much opportunity these days to earn money for amusement of this type.

Aunt Cammie and I finished Shield's Life of Sargent Prentiss, and after I said good night and took a walk to the bridge and back. It was wet under foot, thanks to the grad mud holes, gouged out by the army trucks, but I made it. I saw a youth named Melvil, whom I had never seen before. Henry passed me on the road, having come up from Alexandria from the week-end, and Henry Earle with his Mama, who had also come up. I saw Puny, too, and Nathaniel, and Sam Brown, and Heaven knows who all. Night is the time for news on a plantation. I heard plenty and shuddered a little as I thought of the amount of liquor being consumed by this one and that, for I feel the consequences may be unpleasant long before another day has rolled round, - or before it has come to a close.

920

Sunday, Oct. 5th, 1941.

Many a prostitute has beguiled a good man into being her husband by convincing him that through the infatuation he inspires, he has saved her from a life of sin. And many a scamp has gained dominance over the good judgement of a woman by flattering her into the belief that somehow or other she has made a noble being out of him. Up from Alexandria to spend one day at Melrose, Henry Hertzog talked with the Madam this morning. By noon Frank's goose was cooked.

The weather was curious for October, - all sunshine and a temperature of 90 degrees with the humidity at 98. Physically one stewed. Morally I boiled.

At six o'clock when Frank came with coffee, he told me that Jack Lacase had frisked him for a revolver when Frank had gone to the saloon at 10:30 last night to pay Bill for having driven down to Derry to meet the train on which May arrived from Alexandria. Instinctively I felt that there must have been something to move J. Lacase to such an investigation, but I asked for no details, realizing that darkies seldom tell the whole story when involved in a fracas and that it is useless to attempt any clear understanding of a situation before they are ready, - if ever - to present the evidence of their own free will.

At nine o'clock, when I went to the Big House to work with Aunt Cammie on old Hatchitoches Records, I found Henry there. He and the Madam were discussing problems attendant upon some double weaving with which she is having difficulties. Henry withdrew shortly after I arrived, but he returned frequently for one reason or another so that we transcribed but one document, - a curious 1813 paper in which Francois Rebieux and one Paillotte deposited \$500.00 with the Hatchitoches Judge in order that this amount would be on deposit should Francois Rebieux's impending marriage to Oslette somebody prove to be null and void. The document was so strange and the reason for it so baffling that neither of us could make any sense out of it.

At 10:00 I returned to Lyle's where Elam and Peter called on me shortly afterward. Ostensibly they were making a call on me, but I gathered that they wanted to make use of my checker board, and it wasn't long before they asked if they might use it. But before becoming engrossed in their game, they told me that last night at the saloon Frank and Sam Brown had gotten into some sort of a tangle and that Jack Lacase had made both of them go home.

At dinner, it was obvious that Aunt Cammie was up-set. She said that Frank had attacked Sam Brown at the saloon last night, and that he hadn't made around at the Big House since early this morning and that she understood he had been

921

Sunday, Oct. 5th, 1941 - page 2.

drinking. Sister and her husband automatically be-moaned the fact that their Mother had to have anyone around who would drink. Obviously Henry had been sewing seeds on fertile ground and the Madam's daughter and son-in-law were cultivating it for all they were worth.

Back at the house after dinner I gardened a little until I cut my index finger in such a way as to make transplanting of iris mere of a trick than anything of merit, and so I got on with my desk work. Peter and Blam came in a little later, played checkers for a while on the front gallery and then came in and say in uncomfortable chairs to watch me hammer on my keyboard until they both fell asleep. Poor darkies. Spending six days in the open, I suppose celebrating the Sabbath by sleeping in uncomfortable chairs inside merely fulfills the law of a desire for opposites.

About six o'clock Aunt Cammie came over, looking haggard and obviously fretful. She said she had been clipping plants in the front garden when Sam Brown and Frank started to get into a mix up at the front gate. She said she laid them both out and the at least Frank ought to know better. I observed that Frank at least, since he works at the big house had some reason for going out the front gate while I couldn't think of any reason why Sam should be there at 6 o'clock on Sunday unless it was that he was aggressively minded.

After supper we read from Mrs. Beaumont's Twelve Years of My Life, - an account of a bourgeoisie's activities in Woodville, Miss., from 1854. We said goodnight at 8.

The moon was big and round and the night soft as velvet. I walked to Cane River bridge and sat there for half an hour, and yet the peace and quiet of the night failed to soothe my fury. Returning home before nine, I retired but couldn't sleep and so got up again and attired in a light bath robe, sat until after one o'clock on the upper terrace of my little garden, fortified on one side of my chair by old Grandpa and on the other by Yellow Peril, both of whom had sense enough to enjoy the glory of the night unmindful of the hideous combinations which human beings can contrive to keep troubles those waters of human life which should be left calm.

Three people had succeeded magnificently in making my day miserable, - or should I say four, since I probably was as much at fault as any other the other three in thus permitting myself to be made miserable. Through my mind kept coursing Aunt Cammie's remark whenever J. H. gets after Henry: "You can't fight injustice". And I must say I do find it difficult to do so, especially when Henry poisons the Madam's mind against Frank, and Frank gives them an opening by taking a nap, and

922

Monday, Oct 6th, 1941.

I slept but indifferently last night.

But I awoke promptly enough when I heard the bell on the gate ring, indicating that someone other than Frank was bringing my six o'clock coffee.

The screen door opened curiously and a smallish figure did a clumsy pirouette in negotiating its entrance. Of all people, - it was Bill Reeque, deaf as a stone and excellent as a hoehand, no doubt, but extraordinary as a server of coffee.

I sat bolt up right in surprise, and then began a series of pantomimes which last about 6 minutes while we struggled to get the coffee from his tray to me.

After motioning him to approach the bed side, he gathered up courage and swept clean the top of the console ~~xx~~ standing along side. The generous size pewter ash tray, the large box of matches and the glass vase of cape jasmin crashed to the floor but that didn't ruffle Bill, - who never heard them crash and was quite indifferent as to where they had disappeared.

He seemed to think it a good idea to let me pour. I concurred. But with my coffee I wanted a cigarette, and so at the risk of spilling my cup I made violent gesticulations to attract his attention, and once secured, pointed to the pack of Luckies which had been swished 3 feet away from the bed as he wiped the console top clean. But Bill got the idea, retrieved the cigarettes, handed the pack to me and accepted one for himself. With each of us supplied, he began going through his pockets for a match but could find none. I shouted to him that there were some, - probably under the bed, - or where ever the ash tray, cape jasmin and box had fallen. A pleasant glow illumed Bill's face as he got the idea. He opened the box, extracted a match, lighted his cigarette, and still holding the box, sat down in the chair some distance from my bed. He was the picture of early morning satisfaction, but I was still high and dry, - at least my cigarette was still without any heat other than the warmth of my fingers.

I tried another act, - waving my cigarette in the air to attract his attention. He seemed puzzled at my antics at first but almost instantly caught the purpose behind it, and jumping up, came over to the bed side, and held out his lighted cigarette so that by my efforts at puffing on mine I was able to get some smoke generated from the fire in the end of his, - an a few nice little hot spark which fell on my naked chest.

I am not sure how I did extract my second cup of coffee, and how I ~~at~~ indicated to him that his ritual had been completed and he might go, but go he did and I got on with getting the day started.

923

Monday, Oct. 6th, 1941 - page 2.

The balance of the day seemed unimportant after all this carrying-on.

(interruption)

After Aunt Cammie and I had worked for a while on the old Natchitoches documents, we digressed to examine the mail which Frank brought about 10:30. Aunt Cammie was rather peevish in her conversation with Frank.

After she had gone to take her nap, Frank and I found some large cypress logs in the wood lot, and together we moved them to the suken garden, sinking them partially in the ground to make substantial steps from the "salon de la paix" down into the upper terrace.

Elam came by to assist us in this and other matters, and to report on Melrose doings over the week-end. He said one of his little friends, Henry Earle, had gone to Alexandria on Sunday afternoon, Fony and his wife having taken the child back with them.

In the afternoon I gardened and after supper I retired early.

924

Tuesday, Oct 7th, 1941.

Coffee was much less exciting this morning, albeit more satisfactory, for Frank, rather than Bill appeared at my bedside a little before six.

I talked a great deal about the weather and the possibility of getting some painting done today, - hoping thus to keep off the subject of Saturday night, Henry's Sunday morning report and subsequent domicile in the dog house for Frank.

After continuing our work on the old records, Aunt Cammie and I digested the mail, - which was grand, superlatives from Manhattan and a note from Robina, saying that she was going to try to get down on Thursday to spend two or three days with us.

It seems strange not to have Pat at dinner. He started in the Fall term of school at Cypress, some 8 miles from Melrose yesterday. He leaves home in the morning at seven and returns about 4 P.M. The school bus passes by house, headed south, going as far in that direction as Derry, and thence turns North on the other side of the river, proceeding up the cement highway through Montrose and on to the Cypress school. Pat seems to relish this little tour and school seems to appeal to him too.

Pat's father (Joe) telephoned from Beaumont this evening and talked with J. H. He says that Pat's mother, from whom Joe has been divorced for some year or two, - and who has subsequently married and been divorced, is coming up from her home in the Rio Grande valley and he is going to bring her to Melrose to spend Saturday and Sunday to see the child. J. H. will break the news to Aunt Cammie tomorrow. I don't know how that will set, but something tells me the Weeome-mat of Melrose will be drawn in before the week-end.

There was a nice moon about 8 P.M., and I walked to the bridge and back before retiring.

925

Wednesday, Oct. 9th, 1941.

I had a fairly busy day, gardening what I could and keeping dry as I might in spite of drenching showers which opened up at three different times during the day.

In the morning we labored together, -- Aunt Cammie and I, although we accomplished little, thanks to too many interruptions. During one of these I withdrew long enough to attend to Yellow Peril, the cat of the same color with the curious personality. I think he followed me part way to the bridge last night, and must have played by the wayside for this morning he was one mass of mud from the ears to the end of his tail, although his white napkin below his chin was still spotless, -- making the mud -- pie, -- which was the rest of him, -- the messier in appearance. His tail was as straight as a stick, and the fur so solidly oaked that it looked exactly like a rat tail.

He seemed mighty uncomfortable, and not any more happy when I held him by the faucet beneath the bannas by the front gallery. Frank saw me laboring with him and came to assist. It is marvelous how all animals seem to relax when Frank touches them. It was so with Yellow Peril. It was obvious that he didn't like being held under the faucet, and yet Frank somehow imparted to him that our mission was one of mercy and he didn't struggle. And so, after he had been well soaked and rubbed, we released him and to show his appreciation, he didn't run away, but rather began milling his wet fur about our legs.

J. H. imparted the news regarding Joe's purposed visit with Eugenia to see Pat. Aunt Cammie was adamant. She said that Eugenia couldn't come to Melrose, that if she wanted to see the child, they could entertain him at Beaumont this week-end. She asked J. H. to telephone Joe accordingly. Or rather, J. H. said he would telephone, -- although I believe Aunt Cammie would have preferred to do the talking herself.

It was 7 P.M. when J. H. imparted this news, -- the first time he had seen his mother that day, for in the afternoon she had made her yearly trip to Natchitoches to call on Mrs. Scarborough, -- only to find that the lady was out for the afternoon at her club.

926

Thursday, Oct. 9th, 1941.

Six o'clock and Bill, -- of all people, -- appeared with the coffee tray. I can't go through a detail of all that went on again, but it was as good, although different as on Monday.

A little before seven I went out to the store, thinking I would drive to town with J. H., who was leaving at that hour to drive to Shreveport to catch a ten o'clock plane for Kansas City to spend the afternoon conferring with some Washington official regarding Agriculture. Jax In Natchitoches I said goodbye to J. H., took care of a little business and started walking toward home, hoping that Robina, who had promised to arrive this morning might encounter me on the highway. But Sheriff Paine came along, stopped for me, and so I rode with him as far as Montrose. He was going to Cloutierville to attend the funeral of Sam Lacase, the self-made business man of that place who although scarcely able to write his name dominates the business, -- banking, merchandise and agriculture surroundings of that place.

I walked up the Melrose-Montrose lane. It was a mess, -- mud puddles and slime and the Bayou Brevelle bridge where the tanks fell through still out of commission. At that point I saw Clarence Compton and Grace Lacour. Compton said he was expecting a number of soldiers today, -- tanks and trucks, to encamp on his hay field near the bayou. I thought the Army had all pulled out, but it seems the good work lingers on.

I was back home by 9:30 and Aunt Cammie and I did some work together until 11. A telephone call came from Robina saying that her car had broken down at Ca or Kachatta, some 60 miles north of here and that she wouldn't be along until about 4 P.M.

About 5 o'clock Aunt Cammie telephoned the number which Robina had left whence she had telephoned, and we learned that Robina wouldn't get away until after dark. Aunt Cammie and I accordingly decided to drive up. Pat, -- just back from school, -- for an hour had elapsed since telephoning, decided he would like to go. Leon drove. As we started out, Aunt Cammie told Pat to go tell the overseer we were going out for a few hours. Pat told the overseer, returning to the car to report that the overseer appeared so drunk that he doubted if he understood the message.

We reached Robina about 6:30, had a bite together, and Pat and I returned to Melrose, leaving the two ladies to get caught up on their conversation. In spite of her recent heavy labors, I thought Robina looked exceptionally, even after having spent what must have been a most boring day in a dumb looking gas station on the outskirts of the town.

It was dark before we reached Natchitoches, and by

927

Thursday, Oct. 9th, 1941 - page 2.

the time we reached Bermuda we were impressed by the string of lights coming up the river road on the Bayou Brevelle side of Cane River. It was an endle s string of trucks and tanks, - probably the ones Compton told me were coming to camp on his hay field, although they obviously hand't lin ered long.

We had to wait for them to cross Bermuda bridge. The dust was terrific. We broke in to the line after a little while, and enveloped in clouds of dust, followed in line. At Type Plantation the convoy turned to the east ~~from~~ toward Red River, and so our progress was unimpeded from that point on and we could eat the accumulated dust without the accompanying rattle and bang of the parade.

Back home before eight, I undressed and hopped into the tub, relishing the thought of the oases of mud oosing from me. But I counted against circum tnce, for in turning on the faucet, I discovered there was not a ~~x~~ drop of water. Charming arrangement. And so I dressed again, wandered out to the front, talked for a few moments with Peter and Junior who were milling around in the dark. They said they had been up to Ashley's to go to the movies but that as few if any patrons had appeared, no show was given.

A light was shining from the electric pump house down by the margin of Cane River. We walked over there, thinking we might find some solitary workman laboring in the night to provide water for Melrose. But there was no worker and the electric light blazed in ~~the~~ solitary brilliancy, - and someone, - Frank, I'm afraid, had forgotten to fill the tank for our needs, but was by this time, - I hoped, - fast to sleep unmindful of white folks who are forever wanting to take baths at strange houses, etc., etc.

The painters had been at work on the West end of the house, splashing white paint to give a formal setting to the facade facing my sunken garden. As I couldn't sleep, I strolled in bed room slippers and bath robe about the terrace, getting as best I could a vague impression of how the set was going to appear in tomorrow's light. And thence to bed.

928

Thursday, Oct. 9th, 1941.

After telling Frank most explicitly yesterday that in the event there was no coffee totter in the morning save Bill, I should be happier if he let the coffee go by, - thus saving my vocal cords and Bill's equilibrium, who appeared at my door this morning with coffee but Bill. And half an hour later who rived with the breakfast tray but Bill.

The morning ran along rather speedily, - with a little mail to be knocked off ~~amxxxx~~ and a few suggestions to be made to Temite and Beau regarding the painiming on the west side of the house facing the sunken garden and treatment of the panes of glass in the French doors opening out on it. Shortly afterward Robina came over, and for an hour we started in getting caught up on our conversation. Aunt Cammie came over to have coffee with us at ten, and Robina presented us each with a gift, - a lovely white porcelaine flower holder in the shape of a hand, with an opening in the palm where flowers might be inserted. I was enchanted, and before taking my coffee I ransacked a cape jasmin bush to properly embellish the gifts. They were grand.

After dinner Robina and I walked over to Zeline's to ~~bring~~ take yher a variety of gifts which Robina had brought for her, - a good warm dress for winter, a knitted shawl, etc., etc. We found Zeline busy as a bee, her hands ~~diffix~~ dripping with blood as she came to greet us from around the West side of her house. She said she couldn't shake our hands in their present c ndition, as they had just killed a beef - or a pork, - or possibly both. She said she was rushing to finish it up as she had promised the boy who brought it the guts, which he had asked if he might have.

Back along Cane River we stopped at the saloon and seated ourselves on the fr nt ~~at~~ gallery for a feast to the eye on the placid blue surface of Cane River as we refreshed our thirst. A pleasanter spot with a more charming view I know not, - unless it ~~xxx~~ be that charming little cafe which used to stand high on the terrace at Meudon where the Seine made a great loop, enabling one to gaze for miles across nicely cultivated fields in the direction where Paris brooded in a purple haze some dozen miles away.

Back home before four, we inspected the work being done on the garden facade of the house, and so from there on to supper I excused myself before the Madam and Robina were finished, explaining that I wanted to take off my long beard before

929

Thursday, Oct. 9th, 1941 - page 2.

joining the ladies in Aunt Cammie's room for the evening. This was a lie, however, as I merely wanted to get out because Frank was gyrating between the dining room and the kitchen, obviously having had too much to drink, and I wanted to get him out of sight before Aunt Cammie realized that he had been drinking. I was successful, thank Heavens.

About 8 o'clock our conversation came to an abrupt turn when J. H. appeared, - having flown back from Kansas City, and with arriving at Melrose at the same time were Kenneth and Rudolph and a friend who had driven over from Denton, Texas.

J. H. had some very interesting things to tell us regarding his conversations in Kansas City with the Under-Secretary of Agriculture, there for a meeting. The Secretary had just returned from a two weeks stay in England where he had gone to look over the food situation. He had flown from New York to Newfoundland, requiring 8 hours and from Newfoundland to England in another 8 hours, - both hops having been made in an American bomber being delivered to Britain. His return trip had been made in an American Airways Clipper, via Lisbon, that the return trip required 42 hours. The Secretary told J. H. that he had lost 10 pounds during his two week's stay in England, that food was extraordinarily scarce, and I believe he had been able to have but one egg during his visit, and that a piece of fat bacon was the chief item in the meat line.

The U. S. Government is now urging the American farmers to concentrate of the raising of eggs, cheese and milk for exportation to Great Britain, and the eggs and milk are being sent in powdered form.

After he had left, the Texas boys chatted in the Madam's room with her, Robina and me until after nine, whereupon the men-folks departed, coming to my house (Lyle's) to chat for a while, - mid-night, I guess. The boys had brought me two presents, - a nice leather and woolen jacket and a bottle of rum. I put on the former, as the night was chill, and after building a good fire, we sampled the rum which was excellent. On their departure I put an extra blanket on my bed and jumped in, passing off into sleep almost immediately.

930

Sunday, October 26th, 1941.

Dawn hadn't half made up its mind at 5:30 this morning when Frank, most subtle of all Melrose mulattoes, arrived with coffee. As he poured my first cup he admonished me not to forget that tonight there would be a Fair at St. Augustin's Church on the other side of Cane River. He said he was taking Clara, his wife, and his little boy, and that his sister, Pearl, wife of my barber, and in fact everybody on Cane River would be there.

At 6:45 Sam Brown, that remarkable fellow, arrived with breakfast, finding me but with difficulty as I tugged away at a huge banana root, half hidden away in the heavy scented row of butterfly lilies in the sunken garden. Sam said he was going to the Fair tonight because he thought them Frenchmen, --his way of saying mulattoes,--wouldn't mind too much for one night in the year is a colored man want to spend his money on their money getting scheme.

Breakfast and a hot bath, and over to the Big House to work for a couple of hours with Aunt Cammie on old records. Louisiana Lore was the volume of her accumulated data which we had chosen for this morning's labor. As we examined some of these old documents, we stumbled across the name of Dr. Stone, the famous New Orleans physician of Louisiana before, during and after the Confederate War. Aunt Cammie recalled that he had once taken care of her mother, old Miss Leudovine, ever so long ago, and that he had once confided to his patient that after years and years of practice, he wasn't at all sure if dirt was half so dangerous as most people made out, since he served both mansion and hovel, and that he found just about as much illness in immaculate surroundings as in more tainted spots.

Dinner a little before noon, as Dan Hery was leaving early for Baton Rouge, and conversation for the most part hinged around the fact that lots of winter clothing seemed to me missing, - 2 of Dan's overcoats and several suits, my seaters and jackets, four shirts, etc., etc. What with the failure of the cotton crop, the scarcity of pecans and the disappearance of winter raiment, we all agreed that this year's 90 degree temperatures in October might do well to keep going through December at least.

From one until three, I hammered away on my typewriter, and day dreaming a little in between times as I thought of Sterling Forrest, and how magnificent the color scheme in that lovely region must be by this late date when Jack Frost has probably emptied his paint pots over the hill sides of that enchanting region.

931

Sunday, Oct. 26th, 1941 - page 2.

From 3 to 5, Aunt Cammie and I resumed our labors of the morning, and then with all Melrose quiet, and not a darkie in sight, we invaded the pantry with Pat, and helped ourselves to cold chicken and whatever the place held that appealed to our appetites.

As dusk settled down, I went over to the old Slave Hospital to give my cats their supper. As always, Grandpa was sitting on the gate post, waiting for me to pass through so that he might perform his nightly spectacle of running across the top of the gate to the post on the far side, where he would wait for me to lift his old bag of bones down to the ground. Yellow Peril was screaming like a croupy crow on the gallery and Little Grandpa was frisking clumsily up and down one of the post, again great with embryo kittens. Gardania just sat.

Grandpa once more safe on solid ground, I turned to take care of my feline family when I noticed a neme-like figure at the far end of the gallery. It was little Elam, watering the huge banana plant I had transplanted earlier in the day. He grinned broadly, meaning Yes, when I asked him if he could be as hungry as the cats milling about my legs. He demurred at the suggestion of a glass of milk, but responded favorably to a piece of pound cake and a bottle of cocacola. Heaven alone knows what his little birth r and sisters are having for their evening meal, if any.

Aunt Cammie and I read for a couple of hours from Mrs. Beaumont's account of life in Woodville, Miss., before the War, and at 7:45 we said goodnight.

It was a little after 8 as I crossed the front gardens, uncertainly visible through the muffled light of the heavily veiled moon. Across the square in front of the store, on beyond the garage and along the road passed the gin, I was soon well along the road toward Cane River bridge, and across the river I could see the bright lights which illuminated the yard in front of the Convent where the annual Fair was in full swing.

Inside the wire fence ~~xx~~ dozens of cars from Ile Brevelle were parked, - a precaution taken as a result of the tire-cutting by nasty little boys last year. & Clustering about the Convent, and between it and the Church were numerous little booths and intervening open spaces where Bingo and other games of chance were intriguing the Faithful.

932

3.

Sunday, Oct. 26th, 1941 - page 3.

I glanced over the crowd. There were dozens of mulatto children dashing about, playing tag and generally disporting themselves. Mulatto members of the Church and other citizens of color stood about in groups chatting or risked their nickles at games of chance. The spirit was of gaiety but not boistrousness. Frank had brought his family earlier in the evening, and he spotted me shortly after my arrival. He came over to chat with me, but a hard faced nun broke in on our conversation by an abrupt demand:

"Give me a dime, each of you, so I can gamble on that coffee pot", - designated by a masterful sweep toward a small booth near by. I felt impelled to tell her she might ~~xx~~ do well first of all to take a lesson or two in courtesy from her mulatto parishoners, but I didn't. Frank was embarrassed for her and for the hole in his pocket, and somehow I felt that he was just a little frightened at his inability to comply with the demand of this black uniformed white woman. I was enchanted a few minutes later when she had placed her bet and the wheel of fortune had spun, and she had failed to get her damned old coffee pot.

Frank and I moved on in the direction of the tent where they were serving Chicken Gumbo and Swept Potatoes pie. Peter was standing near by, along with Junior Brown,-- two n gre mis-fits in this sea of mulattoes. Sitting down at the long plank table, we tasted these two jewels of the culinary art. In ardlly I concurred with the historian Belisle, that "if you haven't tasted chicken gumbo as contrived by the mulattoes of Ile Brevelle, you really haven't experienced the last word in the glories of t is delicious dish". Only New Orleans could remotely approach in gastronomic accomplishment, and swanky restaurants in New York or Paris would have charged you about a dollar a throw for it. Here on the Ile it set you back fifteen cents for the glistening gumbo and five cents for the pie.

Reluctantly we gave our places shortly after to gay mulattoes awaiting their turn at this toothsome board, and we strolled in the direction of a gaming table, made in the form of a hollow square around which ranged about 50 or 75 people. It was hear I saw what I never dreamed of seeing. Half way between Convent on Church, at 9 o'clock on Sunday night, were nuns gambling furiously at Bingo.

933

*stray leaves from
to diary*

Sunday, Oct. 26th, 1941 - page 4.

As the two operators in the center of the square called out the numbers, the mulattoe players seated about the board, laughed softly as they placed their kernels of corn on the appropriate numbers, and gently bantered those less fortunate who discovered that their cards now and then missed the numbers being called. But in the center of one of the 4 benches sat two mousy little nuns, seemingly more diminutive in their somber garb and the intensity with which they inclined over their cards, slapping the corn on the numbers as they were called out. Suddenly there was a cry of "Bingo", and one of the Sisters announced herself as the winner. Her prize, of all things, was a 4 pound stick of peppermint candy. The mulattoes applauded respectfully, but she paid not attention to anyone, not even to her silent companion, but merely folded the prize within the folds of her voluminous dress, never looking to right or left, but merely plunking down another ten cents for another card to begin her gambling again.

As an interlude in all these doings, I took a turn toward the quiet road along the river leading to the bridge. I met Grace Lacour, (curious name for a youth) who evidently sought a little of God's quiet in the night. Guy Metoyer, his father and several other boys and men, were loitering about the gallery of the saloon, gawk from appearances, but light enough along the cracks of the door. Within sounds from the bar filtered outward. We chatted for a few minutes and then walked back to the Church. It seems there was to be a dance in the Convent at ten o'clock. I declined the invitation of the boys to go in, and turned back down the River Road. Log was there, looking balder than ever in his snowy shirt, and Fugabon and several other negroes. Fugabon asked if he might walk with me as far as the bridge. He had something he wanted to ask me. We sat for a few minutes on the rickety ballustrade. He said he was again to become a father, - his fourth child, I believe, and he wanted to know if he could name the child Francoise or Françoise as the case might be. I told him that for my part I would be delighted. And so with much other chatter and equal amounts of laughter, he departed, saying: "Goodnight parain", and disappeared in the dark.

Peter was waiting for me at the far end of the bridge, so little Elam told me, as I met him a George Washington, the "Wash Lady's son, mid way across. I asked the boys to be sure to try the gumbo, - poor little Elam probably hadn't had a square meal in days, and so Peter and I headed up the road toward Melrose. Peter said goodnight at Regis' house where he lives, and I plunged through the deep shadows of the gardens before the Big House, and so around to the half hidden old slave hospital, and there to sleep as the clock struck eleven.